

Persecution APPEARING With its own OPEN FACE, IN *WILLIAM ARMORER.*

As will be sufficiently manifest to all that may impartially read this following Relation of the Cruel Proceedings of the said *William Armorer*, with some others, against the Innocent People of God called QUAKERS, in the Town of *Reading*, in the County of *Berkshire*: Of his taking of them up, and Imprisoning great Numbers of them: And of the continuance of their Sufferings to this day, being almost Three years and a half. And of his unwearied and Cruel Practices against that Innocent People from time to time.

Discovered and laid open, to the end that Lyes and false Reports may be stopped, and that the King and all People may be rightly informed, and truly acquainted with the Case, as it is clearly and truly in it self.

Matt. 5. 11, 12. *Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in Heaven; for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.*

Rev. 2. 10. *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, the Devil shall cast some of you into prison, &c.*

Psal. 119. 126. *It is time for thee, Lord, to work, for they have made void thy Law.*

2

PRACTICAL

卷之三

10

1. The first and most important consideration in the choice of a site for a new hospital is the location of the site.

1996-1997

To the READER.

Friend,

THOU mayest be sensible, That great and many have been the Trials and Sufferings of the People of God in Ages and Generations past, who did bear witness against wickedness, Idolatry and Oppression, and all the unrighteous Laws and Decrees of men; bearing a righteous Testimony for God, his Way and Truth, upon earth; for which cause they have always been persecuted by wicked and ungodly men, whom the Devil, the Enemy of mankind, hath always made his Instruments, to withstand the work of the Lord God in every dispensation of time, wherein the Lord hath been pleased to appear and manifest himself unto men; and as Truth and Righteousness hath flourished and born rule in the heart, and the true worshipped of God been exalted and set up; so much the more hath Deceit, Cruelty and Oppression, appeared against it, through wicked and cruel-minded men; whereby the Lord was displeased and provoked to anger, and his indignation and wrath was many times kindled against the Kings and Rulers of the Earth, because of the Afflictions and Oppressions of his People, which he did see and take great notice of; as the heavy Plagues, and dreadful judgments which were known and felt in the earth, were signal Testimonies of; whereby (for the cause before-mentioned) they were brought to perpetual shame and confusion, and an example to all that should come after, and tread in their foot-steps. As in the case of Cain, who was wrathful, and slew his brother Abel about sacrifice, because Abel's was accepted.

accepted, and his was not, being wicked; and Abel offered unto God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain; by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, Gen. 4. Heb. 11. Also in the case of Lot, it may be seen how wickedness and oppression did abound in the men of Sodom against him; and how they compassed his house, because of the men, the Angels of the Lord, which were with him; and pressed to break the door, to search for the strangers: These were the Sodomites who were made Examples of Gods Eternal vengeance, to all persecutors and ungodly men, Gen. 19.

Also in the case of the children of Israel, when the Lord manifested himself unto them by Moses in Egypt, who commanded them to worship contrary to the worship and wills of the Egyptians, and walked contrary to their ways and customs, and were oppressed and held in bondage, till God was provoked to destroy them, seeing his heavy Plagues and Judgments did not reform them, Exod. 3, 14.

And also the Judges and Kings of Israel, who were wicked, and did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, and regarded not him, nor his way and people, how the Lord, the Most High God, dealt with them according to their doings, and how he often cut their dayes short in the earth, and made their Names a reproach for ever.

Also in the case of Haman, whom the King Ahasuerus had exalted and given Power and Authority unto, how he insulted over the Kings peaceable Subjects, and poor Jews misrepresenting, and falsely accusing them to the King, because Mordecai the Jew, could not give that honour to him, which belonged to the Lord; telling the King, That their Laws were divers from all people, and that they kept not the Kings Laws; and therefore said, it was not for the Kings profit to suffer them: And the King giving too much credit unto this envious, bloody-minded man, consented to him against

To the READER.

824. 8

gainst the Jews, and bid him do as he would to them, and left them wholly to the mercy of a merciless man to destroy them; and in the Kings Name he began to proceed against the Jews; so that his Villany must be done in the Kings Name, which was his Cloak, and to execute the Kings Laws, (or that destructive, unrighteous Decree which he through wicked Enmity had obtained) as if the King had sworn him to do all mischief in his Name; which would have been great dis honour to the King, if he should have brought his wicked intentions to pass; and would undoubtedly have provoked the Lord God of Israel to anger against the King, to destroy him: But the Lord appearing for his innocent people, the Kings heart was turned, and he perswaded from his Resolution which he had made through mis-information, and then see what followed this proud Haman, who was exalted as it were from the dunghill to the Throne, Esth. 3.7.

And again, how the Princes and Presidents of King Darius, in fearing that Truth and Righteousness should be exalted by Daniel; and Deceit and Wickedness thrown down, they finding no occasion against him, except it were concerning the Law and Worship of his God, for they could not deny but he was an honest peaceable man, and his conversation among men was blameless and harmless; and what was the matter then? why did they persecute him and throw him into the Lyons Den. Why, these envious men that purposed to destroy him, coming into his Chamber, and finding him seeking the Lord, or making petitions to his God, as he use to do at other times, (notwithstanding there was a Law made against it) with his window open, they went to stir up and incense the King against him, saying, Hast thou not signed a Decree, That every man that shall ask a Petition of any God or Man, within thirty dayes, save of thee, O King, (or as thou hast prescribed) shall be cast into the Lyons Den,

To the READER.

Den; and here is one Daniel, who regardeth not thee, O King; nor the Decree that thou hast signed; but makes his petitions three times a day, &c. Dan. 6. And this was his crime, for worshipping God, or asking petitions of him, according to his usual manner; but see the end of his Accusers and Persecutors, Jer. 24. And the King repealed that Law, in which he pleased God.

And again, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others, were persecuted by their own Nation the Jews, for bearing witness against their evil practises, by word and conversation, and because they could not conform to their unrighteous Laws; yet the Jews pretended to worship the true God, and did profess love and service to him in words; which some perhaps may think were more justifiable than those Persecutors before-mentioned, who worshipped nothing else but Creatures, and the works of mens hands: But that cannot be; for persecution for Religion, and tender Conscience sake, in whomsoever it appeared, was never of God, nor practised by good men: And it is worse, and more wicked in them who profess the true God, than in those who neither know, nor own him in words; and a bare profession of God, his Law and Ordinances, cannot justify any man or people in the sight of God, while that nature and spirit rules in them, which leads to persecution.

And the chief Priests, Scribes and Pharisees, had a large Profession of God and Scriptures, and had the Law of God read among them every Sabbath-day; and did many things which God commanded to be done, and yet persecuted Christ that was the Substance; and said they had a Law; and by their Law he ought to dye, Job. 19. And his Apostles were also persecuted by them as Blasphemers, and such as changed their Landable Customs and Laws, and turners of the world upside down; because the Lord was with them, in whose Authority they preached the Gospel, and struck at the very root

To the READER.

826 D

root of Iniquity, Wickedness and Oppression, and their vain Customs, which the people then could not endure to hear beaten down; but the then Rulers commanded them to preach no more in the Name of Jesus; and they gathered great multitudes together sometime by the Sea-side, on Mountains, Fields, and in upper Chambers, separate from the Jews and Heathens, Synagogues and Temples; and many did suffer great afflictions by reason thereof. And thus in brief (Reader) thou mayest see and remember how righteous men that truly feared God, and wrought righteousness in the earth, have been persecuted, and cruelly intreated both by professors and prophanes.

And as it was then, He that was born after the flesh, persecuted him that was born after, and walked in the Spirit; even so it is now in this our day, wherein the God of Heaven hath appeared unto us, and visited us in his everlasting Love and Mercy, by the Light and Spirit of his Son Christ Jesus, which we have received, and by which we are led into all Truth and Righteousness; and from the filthy conversation and wayes of the world, to bear witness for God, his Way and Worship, as it is made manifest to us; because of which we also have been persecuted, and cruelly intreated, since the Lord gathered us to be a people; and many have dealt hardly with us, and rose up against us for these twelve or fourteen years; and all sorts of people, from the high professor, to the profane, that have been in power in the world, have pushed at us. But now more abundantly, and particularly, one William Armorer, a Justice so called; and his Abettors, as may be seen by this following Relation, who hath appeared against us in this Town of Reading, more like a Monster in nature, than a man, and much less like a Christian, though he would be so accounted; as also the rest of our Persecutors would: But their works do make him and them manifest; and according to their proceedings (which thou wilt here find

ga-

To the READER.

gathered into as short a compass as we could well, to keep the substance of things) thou wyldest judge of bins and them ; for we desire not to lay open the cruel dealing of our adversaries farther then to relate their own actions ; neither have we put a worse face upon it, then it is really in it self. But if it doth appear ugly, cruel and monstrous, it is their own ; we have not wronged them in one particular, that we know of ; neither have we filled paper, to amplify, with many words to make a large volume, to set out the cruelty of his and their proceedings, and how contrary it is to the known Laws of the Kingdom , but to leave that to thy ingenuous understanding, as thou shalt read the Relation, to make up that which for brevities sake we have omitted ; and the reason why it has lain so long, and not been published, as many have both expected and desired, was, because we did not desire to lay open his cruelty, or to make a noise of our sufferings (for in that we have the infallible testimony and evidence of Gods Eternal Spirit in our Consciences, that we suffer for well doing, and for righteousness sake ; we are fully satisfied in our selves, if it had been buried in Oblivions Grave) but would rather have him amend and repented ; but seeing he still continues to deal hardly and cruelly with us, and not only so, but misrepresents us, and falsly accuseth us to many who do not know his proceedings against us , we cannot but bring these things to publike view, for the clearing of that blessed Truth and Testimony for which we suffer , and our innocence, which is deeply concerned herein, and to satisfie all people who have heard the rumour thereof ; as also, that he may see and remember what he hath done against us, and leave off his bad intents and work of Cruelty, and repent of them.

And Reader, thou wilt find by this following Relation, That the chief Cause of this our Suffering is, Because we cannot swear at all, it being forbidden by Christ Jesus,

To the READER.

sur; whom we must bear in all things; and by his Apostles; and being inwardly persuaded in our Consciencies by his Spirit; That we (as Christians) ought not to swear in any case, (as the true Christians have been heretofore) we dare not do it. And also, because we meet together to seek God, to wait upon him, and to ask Petitions of him, as we use to do, with our doors open: Because of this, we are accused as Plotters, breakers of the Kings Laws, &c. and thronged up in Prisons, and sentenced to Banishment from the Land of our Nativity; and all the Crime they can find us guilty of, is, Because we confess we meet to seek the Lord, or wait upon him; and this our Adversaries accounts sufficient ground to proceed against us; whereby it is fully manifest, That it is against the appearance of Good, of Sobriety, of Truth and Righteousness, that this old Spirit of Cain, of the Sodomites, of Haman, and of the cruel Jews, is risen in William Armorer, and some others, who take occasion against us, because of the Law and Worship of our God; else he could have nothing against us, nor justly accuse us; but because he himself comes to our Meetings again and again, as thou wilt see, and finds us seeking the Lord, or asking Petitions of our God, and nothing else he can prove against us; for we can appeal to him, and all people in this place, Who we have wronged or hurt in any thing? And have we not lived peaceably, harmlessly, and honestly amongst our Neighbours? And if nothing else can be found against us, but for the cause before mentioned, is it not great pity that any of the Rulers of England should be so much like those wicked Persecutors before mentioned, as to have a hand in such a work? And doth it not tend very much to the dishonour of the King, that such things should be acted in his Name? And do not such men do the King much more hurt, then ever they can do him good, by

To the READER.

is obliging the hearts of all his best and most truest Subjects, by these wilful and rude Proceedings in his Name, and only satisfies the Rabble of rude deboist people, in whom his safety doth not at all consist. To say no more, we shall leave it to the serious consideration of the wise Reader, and remain friends unto him and all men, and do pray for the Conversion of our Enemies, who hate us, though we are continued under great Oppression.

From the Prisoners called Quakers,
in Reading-Gaol, the 13th day
of the 6th Month, 1667.

Persecu-

PERSECUTION appearing in its own Open Face, &c.

Before we come to speak particularly of the Proceedings of *William Armore*, we thought fit (as in its right place) to give a short Relation of the Proceedings of *George Thorne*, in the time of his Mayoralty, in the year 1662, and how he acted his part against the People called *Quakers*, being his known Neighbours in the Town of *Reading*. But he being since dead, we shall say the less of him, only for the sake of such as are yet living, that they may not tread in the footsteps of unwise and cruel-minded-men, and that those that have had a hand in these things, may take warning, and repent, before the time cometh, when the wicked ceaseth to act, and receiveth his reward according to his works, which follows him.

The 8th day of the second Month, called *April*, 1662, the Sessions being holden at *Newberry* for the County of *Bucks*, where *Rich: Palmer* of *Oakingham*, late Judge, where *Thomas Curtis*, *George Lamboll*, and eight more, appeared, being warned thither for not going to their Worship, an Indictment being read against them upon that account; They pleaded not guilty, and the Court required of them to put in Bail for their appearance the next Sessions; one of them answered, They were known to them, and if they would take their words to appear, they would promise to appear; but that not being accepted, they were sent to the Gaol.

The 15th of the 4th Month, called *June*, 1662, *George Thorne*, Mayor, sent two Constables, *Thomas White*, and *John Kenton*, (both which also are since dead) to the Meeting at *Tho: Curtis* his house, and took the Names of Friends at the Meeting, and said they must come before the Mayor or the next morning: One of them answered,

That they would not go out of the way on purpose, but might go if the Mayor did send for them. The next day the Constables and Officers with a Warrant from *Geo: Thorne*, took *William Lamboll*, *William Tompson*, *Anthony Sadler*, *Thomas Tudway*, *Walter Emerton*, *Joan Dee*, *Anne Hatt*, *Hannah Webb*, and *Sarah Lamboll*, some in the street, some at their own houses, and some going to their work; some of whom desiring to go before the Mayor, being brought before him, he demanded bond of them to appear next Sessions; they answered, They could promise to appear: But that not being taken, he sent them to Gaol; and being brought to the Gaol-door, one of the Officers said to the Under-keeper, *Here I have brought you two honest men*. But *S. Lamboll*, and *H. Webb*, were bailed by *John Miles*, unknown to them.

The 22d of the same Month, *George Thorn* Mayor, and *Thomas Whise* Constable, came to the Meeting, and took Nineteen Friends, viz: *Leo: Coale*, *Joseph Coale*, *Jonathan Lamboll*, *Thomas Chelton*, *Jo: Walker*, *Jo: Fellows*, *Joseph Phips*, , *Jo: Bonlt*, *James Whiteheart*, *Edw: Smith*, *Jo: Ransolds*, *Rich: Hutchins*, *Anne Sharp*, *Margrey Richardson*, *Eliz: Dee*, *Widow*, *Bridget Smith*, *Sarah Lamboll*, and *Hannah Webb*, and sent them to the Gaol for being at the Meeting; *Sarah Lamboll*, and *Hannah Webb* being committed in the Town-Sessions.

The 8th of the 5th Month, called *July*, the Sessions for the County was holden at *Abingdon*, to which place the Prisoners before mentioned were brought, and the Assizes being the next day, the Sessions was adjourned for two weeks: the Prisoners not Called.

And the 18th. of the same Month, the Sessions was holden for the *Burrough of Reading*, where *Sarah Lamboll* and *Henry Webb* appeared: Instead of proceeding against them according to their Commitment, for being at a meeting; they asked them if they would take the Oath of Allegiance, which they for Conscience sake refusing, were sent to *Goale* again.

And then the 22d of the same Month, the Prisoners before mentioned, were had again to *Abingdon* to the Sessions, being the time to which they before Adjourned, where 34 Prisoners appeared, some being left sick at *Goale*; And *Tho: Curtis* and *Geo. Lamboll*, and 7 of the other 8 that were Indicted at *Newberry*, for not going to their Worship (one of them being an ancient man, and not well, was left behind

behind at Reading) were tryed by the Jury, and freed. Yet notwithstanding, *Tho: Holt* the Judg, caused the Oath of Allegiance to be tendred to *Tho: Curtis*, and *Gee: Lamboll*, whereby to ensnare those two only in that snare; for refusing of which, they were committed again to Gaol; and of the other seven they demanded Sureties for their good behavirur, which they not giving, were sent likewise again to Gaol; and the other twenty five Prisoners (being quit by the Jury) were discharged.

The 27th of the same Month came *Geo: Thorne* Mayor, and *The: Stikes* Justice (so called) with *Hugh Smith* the Clerk, and many Soldiers with them, to the Meeting, having the Statute-book with them also: One of the Friends desired they would read the Preamble to the Oath; but they refusing, took Forty seven Friends, viz. *The: Noris*, *Tho: Tidway*, *Jo: Kemboll*, *Leo: Key*, *Joseph Phips*, *William Lamboll*, *Jo: Ranolds*, *Christopher Cheesman*, *Walter Emerton*, *Humphrey Emerton*, *Tho: Bartlet*, *Jo: Walker*, *William Tempson*, *Jo: Bush*, *James Whitheart*, *Jo: Pegger*, *William Tect*, *Tho: Chelton*, *Jasper May*, *Jo: Fellows*, *Amber Sadler*, *Edw: Smith*, *Tho: Speed*, *William Whistler*, *Jonathan Lamboll*, *Ann Hart*, *Francis Kent*, *Elez: Tidway*, *Joan Willesby*, *Rachel Cope*, *Sarah Paine*, *Anne Weedon*, *Sarah Lamboll*, *Elez: Dee*, *Jane Hussy*, *Joan Wheeler*, *Anne South*, *Hannah Wienn*, *Hannah Emerton*, *Judith Smith*, *Bridget Smith*, *Hannah Mills*, *Anne Webb*, *Dorothy Clarke*, *Catherine Edsol*, *Francis Dawson*, and *Joan Terry*, and made a Muster, and sent them to the Gaol, many of whom were freed but a few days before, at Abingdon, as the Reader may observe.

The 5th of the 8th Month, called October, 1662, the Sessions was holden at Newberry; but all the Women were left at home by the Mayor's Order, there being so many, it may be the burden was too heavy for him to bear; so they were dropp'd, and taken no notice of: And *Tho: Curtis*, and *George Lamboll* were not had thither, but the seven men before mentioned, committed for not giving Sureties, were called and discharged; and the rest of the men last taken, being there called, were indicted for being at an unlawfull Meeting; and having pleaded Not guilty, the Court demanded Sureties, for not finding of which, they were sent back again to Gaol.

The 13th day of the 11th Month, 1662, the Sessions for the County was held at Reading, but none of our Friends (the Prisoners)

ers) were called, but were kept till the next Quarter-Sessions held at Newberry the 28th of the second Month called April, -63; and being had thither, twenty one in number being called into the Court, the Judg said to them, *You are discharged, and pray God bless you; but though we do discharge you, yet we cannot give away the Clerks fees:* The Prisoners told them, they would speak with the Clerk; which having done, told him they could give him no money; but however, he discharged them.

And Geo: Thorne Mayor, having thus given the onset upon his peaceable and harmless Neighbours, for their tender Conscience sake, and having haled them to prison, and thronged them together, and hurried them backward and forward from one Sessions to another, till his own works had even tired him, his fury being pretty much spent, another Instrument appeared to carry on that work, to wit, William Armorer, who came on with open mouth, as it were, as if he would have devoured at once, the sheep of the Lords Pasture; and as if he had bid defiance to the Lord God of Israel, and were resolved to destroy his chosen people, being furnished with great strength and authority, and having his will for his Law, and prisons ready to receive all that come to his hand; or rather, what his own heart and hand found out, searching the Houses, Chambers and Shops of innocent people for that end, as if it were Crime enough to be called a (Christian) Quaker, and his punishment must far exceed the quality of the Crime, being almost three year and a half's Imprisonment: And thus he has continued to this time, as the Reader may observe.

Upon the 27th day of the first Month, in the Year 1664, William Armorer came to the house of Thomas Curtis (where the people of God were peaceably met together, to wait upon, and worship the Lord in Spirit and in Truth, according to their usual manner) and pulled out of the Meeting the young children, then took thirty four men, whose Names are as followeth, viz, William Lamboll, Richard Hutchins, William Tompson, Jasper May, Edward Lambourne, John Fellow, James Marlow, Anthony Sadler, Thomas Tudway, James Whiteheart, Walter Emerton, Joseph Phipes, Tho: Speed, Tho: Chelton, Tho: Cenicke, Tho: Heifield, Tho: Hinde, Daniel Green, Henry Picing, James Layell, Hen: Bristow, Rob: Pider, Tho: Curtis, George Lamboll, Leonard Key, John Kembell, Jonathan Lamboll, Leo: Coale, Ios: Paine,

Paine, John Becke, Tho: Norris, Edward Fellow, William Whistler, and Christopher Page; and caused the Clerk to make a Mitterimus, the substance whereof was, for being at an unlawful meeting, contrary to an Act of Parliament made about a year or two before, &c. and delivered them to *Richard Johnson, and John Creed, Constables,* who had them to the County-Gaol in *Reading.*

The 3d day of the 2d Month called *April, 1664,* came *William Armorer* again to the meeting, and took two men, viz. *Robert Paine, and John Boults,* being all the men that were at the meeting; And said to them, what a Devil are you met again? I will send you all to Prison; what a Devil, are you all Dumb? hath the Devil cast his Club over you, and bewitched you? *J. Boults* said, We have learned of a better Spirit, even the Spirit of Christ Jesus, which teacheth us to deny the Devil and all his Instruments. *William Armorer*, Who a Devil will believe you? hang you, you are deluded by the spirit of the Devil; I will send you all to Prison; *J. Boults*, Many good people will believe us, and we wholly deny the spirit of the Devil, having chosen a better spirit, the spirit of Christ Jesus, which is a spirit of love and meekness, of patience and humility. *W. A.* You say true, it is so. *J. B.* And the spirit of the Devil is an angry, furious, hasty, persecuting spirit. *W. A.* said he is so: *J. B.* Come, let us try who is of this spirit, thee, or us. *W. Armorer*, A Devil on you, I could find in my heart to lay you over the pate with my Cane. *J. Boults*, I thou oughtest to keep the peace, and I hope thou wilt not go to break it; didst thee ever read that Christ, or any of his Apostles did Persecute any? *W. Armorer*, Did none? then Christ's flock is but a little flock, and there is but a few of you, but I will make you fewer, I will hunt you out, and send you to Prison. *J. Boults*, that's the weakest thing that thou canst do; if thou canst convince me of any thing that is evil, I will hear thee and let the Prisoners alone: after some other discourse he caused a Mitterimus to be made, and sent them to *Goale:* And the 19th day of the same Month the General Quarter Sessions for the County was held at *Newberry,* but the Prisoners before mentioned were not had thither, nor Called; neither at the Sessions for the Burrough of *Reading,* held about the same time, though most of them were Inhabitants of the same Corporation.

The First of the 3d Month called *May, 1664,* came *William Armorer* again to the Meeting, and took one man and six women, viz. *Tha.*

Tho. Bartlet, Anne Hart, Anne Sharp, Hanab Webb, Sarah Paine, Dorothy Clarke, and Elizabeth Cragg, and made a Mittimus much after the manner of the former, and sent them to Goal by Rich. Johnson Constable.

The 8th of the same Month, came W. Armorer to the Meeting again, there being no man there, he took seven women, *Bridges Smith, Anne Curtis, Sarah Lamboll, Judith Smith, Katherine Woodard Martha Cheseeman and Elizabeth Hampon;* and made a Mittimus as before, and sent them to *Goale*, by *Tho. Coates Constable.*

Upon the 22^d of the same Month, *William Armorer* came again, to the Meeting in great fury, as formerly, but finding only a few Children and young Maidens, he pulled them out himself, (and his men) having a great Club, or Staff in his hand, struck one of the Maidens a sore Stroke, that she felt it for some time after; and told them he would send them to Prison; and other threatening speeches what he would do to them, if they came thither again: And on the seventh of the fourth month, the Gaoler called for all the Women and Maids before-mentioned, except six, *viz. Ann Hart, Ann Curtis, Sab Lamboll, A. Sharp, Sarah Paine, and Eliz. Cragg,* and gave them leave to go out of prison, and to come again when he sent for them, having (as is supposed) some private Instruction from *William Armorer* so to do; and about the 18th day of the same month, *Tho: Coates Constable*, came to the Gaol, and fetcht out one of those six (*Anne Sharp*) also, the Gaoler demanding fees of her Husband, he refused to pay it; notwithstanding his refusal, she was set at liberty, for the Constable had some work for her Husband to do.

And now we come to the Proceedings at the General Quarter-Sessions held at Abingdon the 12th of the 5th month, 1664, against the Prisoners before mentioned, who were taken up, and committed for being at meetings, &c. But being brought to the place aforesaid, they were informed that the Justices would have put them off to the Sessions for the Burrough of *Reading*, but *William Armorer* would not consent to it; and one *Hersie* told *Champion* the Deputy-Clerk, That here was about three-score *Quakers*, and asked what he should do with them: *Champion* replied, That he would shew them a trick; which he endeavoured to do indeed, because some of the moderat' st men who were warned to be of the Jury, were excepted

ed against; and put out; because some of our friends about a year before, being there upon the same account of meeting, were cleared by the Jury, there being no sufficient evidence against them. Well, in the Afternoon they were called to the Barr, expecting a Trial according to their Mittimus: One Friend, *James Whiteheart*, being the first that was called to the Barr, putting not off his Hat to them, they were very angry with him, and many words passed, and he was taken from the Barr, but they never so much as asked him whether he would take the Oath of Allegiance, or not. The next that was called, was one *Henry Piring*, (who was committed among them, but was no Quaker, so called) who coming to the Barr with his Hat in his hand, and bowing his body to them, *Thos Holt* (who was Judge) said, *Heres a man hath some manners;* and asked him if he would take the Oath of Allegiance? He answered, he had taken it twice already: The Judge said, *But you were no Quaker then;* The said *Henry* replied, *Neither am I now; but have been many weeks among them, and I never saw no harm by them, but do them fit people!* Upon which *William Arber* stood up, and said to him, *Why did you not tell me so before?* *Henry* said, *Your Worship will so whifful, that you would not hear me.* Then the Judge said, he must take it again; so the Oath was read to him, and he said after them, and having taken the Oath, the Judge stood up, and made a motion to the rest of the Justices, That because this *Henry Piring* had taken the Oath, he did desire that they would consent that he should go free, without paying any fees; to which the Justices confessing, bid the Gaoler take no fees of him, and would have had him to have past out at a back door, and come no more among the Quakers. But he told them, *He hoped now he was freed y^e he might go out at which door he would.*

Then the Judge bid the Gaoler bring up ten of the Prisoners at a time; and *Tho: Norris*, and several others, were called; and they asked them whether they would take the Oath of Allegiance; they answered, they were not committed upon the account of the Oath, but were taken at a meeting, and expected to think upon that account: Others of them answered, Christ had commanded them not to swear at all, and therefore they could not take an Oath; and that they were not sent to Gaol for that, but were taken at a meeting, &c. Judge, *We discharge you to your meeting, but you must take the Oath*

Oath of Allegiance. Many being called, answered to the same purpose as the former. *Tho: Curtis* was called ; the Judg asked him if he would take the Oath of Allegiance ? Who answered , He had something to say , and desired he might be heard ; and said he did not refuse the Oath upon the account as not to bear his Allegiance to the King, but because Christ had commanded him not to swear at all ; for he was perswaded, That he had manifested himself to be as good a Subject to the King , as most in the County , since He came in ; and that if he could take any Oath either to save his Estate or Life, he did profess he would begin with that Oath ; and therefore desired that the Court would be pleased to let some of their Ministers shew him by the Scriptures how he might take it, and not break the Command of Christ, and he would do it. The Judg called to a Minister that was near them, to spend half a quarter of an hours time with him, to satisfie him in this particular , and they would sit still and hear. But the Priest (one *Worell*, as we remember his Name was) said, putting off his Hat, and bowing to the Court, he desired to be excused, for he had, had to do with some of them already, and they were an obstinate people, and would not be satisfied, or to that purpose.

Tho: Curtis : This is commonly the answer we have from these men, when they are desired to answer us a question according to the Scripture, that we might be satisfied ; they answer, We are obstinate, or such like.

So the Gaoler was commanded to take them all away, by *William Armorer*, who said, I know they will not take it ; though many of them never denied it.

The next morning, being the 13th of the month aforesaid, after *William Armorer* was gone out of Town, two Friends, viz. *Richard Billingsly*, and *William Sargood*, were called to the Barr (being warned to appear there for not going to their Church, though there was no Priest in the Parish) and expected they should have been proceeded against for that ; instead of which , they asked them if they would take the Oath of Allegiance ; and because they could not swear , were sent to Gaol with the Prisoners before mentioned.

The 19th of the same month, *John Credt Constable*, came with a warrant from *William Armorer*, to the Gaoler , and demanded the body

body of Tho: Curtis; which being delivered by the Gaoler, was had to the Bear Inne, where William Armorer was, who said to Tho: Curtis, You are going to Bristol Fair, but I will stop your journey, (the Sheriff having given him leave to go to Bristol about his occasions) and commanded the Constable to carry him to the Town-Prison, the Counter; he refusing to go, (being a Prisoner in the County-Gaol, the Constable called an Officer, and compelled him; and they had him to the Counter without M^ttime.

And the 22d of the same month, being Sessions time for the Burrough of Reading, Rich: Johnson Constable, came and fetcht out Tho: Curtis from the Counter, before Tho: Stikes Mayor, and William Armorer, Edward Dolby, Justices, and many others in the Council-Chamber: The Mayor asked him, Whether he sent those Papers? T. C. said, I received them from a little Maid that came from the Gaol, and I sent them: They said, But did you write them? He answered, Nay. Did you indite them, said the Mayor? I will not answer to such questions, (said T.C.) read the Paper, and then I will say more to it. So they gave him the Paper, and he read it; and being reading that part which saith, Because of swearing, the Landmowers; Alderman Johnson said, that was very true: And having read it, T. C. said it was every word true, and should stand for ever; and he did own it: Then said William Armorer, I will send it to the Council. T. C. said, I would they had every one, one of them: A Copy of which here follows.

THE Eternal God, from whom no secrets can be hid, sees your doings, and the eye of the Lord beholds the way that now you walk in, and the works you are about, who are persecuting his Lambs, and imprisoning his people, who for the fulfilling of his commands, and walking in his ways, have chosen the sufferings of this present world, rather than all the glory and pleasure that this world can afford them; and we have counted up our cost, and do find upon serious deliberation, That it is better for us to dye by the hands of the hard-hearted and cruel men of this world, in and under the favour, love and friendship of the Lord, than to lose our peace with him, by making shipwreck of our faith and peace of conscience

which the Lord hath given us; and we have truly debated, pondered and considered this our present state of hard and cruel suffering in our own bosomes; and weight'd our hearts in the ballance of Gods truth; and there is nothing in all this world that could make us to leave our Wives and Families, our Callings, Estates and Employments, but this very thing, namely, The Truth of our God, and the Worship of Christ Jesus; the profession and practise of which, at this day is the ground of this our sufferings. And whereas you press us so hard to take the Oath of Allegiance, and come to your Church; We do declare in the Sincerity of our hearts, That the ground and cause why we cannot take an Oath in any case, altho' it be to the loss of our Estates and Lives, is, Because Jesus Christ and his Apostles hath commanded us not to swear at all; and it is not lawful for us, in any case to break Christs command. And if any of your Ministers, Doctors, Priests or Bishops, can make it appear by Gods Word, or the Scriptures, that its lawful for us to swear, and may swear, and not fall into damnation, we will take it. And therefore cease calling for us to swear, and break Christs commands, till your Doctors, Bishops, Priests, or Ministers, or some of them, hath convinced us that it may be done; and Christs command not broken. There is too much swearing already, and because of swearing, the Land mourns. And as concerning coming to your Church, we have with much gravity considered the true state of the Church of which you are members, to see if possible, we might come to you, and join with you, and not lose our peace with God; and this we find, That you have called your selves by the Name of the Church of Christ, but the nature of Christians, and of the Church of Christ, is denied by you: For the pride we daily see, and the Oaths we daily hear from the Members of your Church, is sufficient to make a Heathen or a Turk (much more a Christian) quite out of love with it: And further, the cruelty that is practised by your members, as haling men and women out of their peaceable Meetings, and casting them into Prison, contrary to the Lord Jesus Christ's Practice and Doctrine, is ground enough for us to believe that you are neither members of Christ's Church, nor children of God, nor heirs of his blessed Kingdom; for if you were members of Christ's Church, you would not act such high blasphemies against the living God, as to swear by the Blood and

Wounds

Wounds of God; and God damn me, and God confound me; and when you have so done, enter into your Church, and cry aloud, *We beseech thee to hear us good Lord;* and this is too common among the members of your Church. Now in the coolnes of your hearts, consider what it is you are so earnestly persuading us unto: How can we bathe among you, and joyn in prayer with such as act this great wickedness? If we should come and join with you, the Lord might scold us all together, for it is the same tongue, the same lips, and the same spirit that swears before you enter, that when you are entered, calls to God to hear you; so that the words of the Apostle are fulfilled, *Out of the same mouth proceeded blessings and cursings.* Oh ye unwise in heart! ye know not God, neither of what spirit you are; and therefore be advised before it is too late; for in love to your soules do we declare unto you, That if you will have us joyr to you, your way must be to joyn to the Lord, repent of the wickedness that you have done, and return to the Lord God, and put away the evil of your doings, and cast out from among you the Proud, and the Drunkard, the Swearers, the Murderers, the Adulterers and whoremongers, and all other filthiness of flesh and spirit that is among you; and then clothe your selves with meekness and patience, as the Church of Christ was in the dayes of the Apostles; and then if we will not joyn with you, and come to your Church, let our shame be upon our heads; for till then, although you call your selves Christians, you are but Antichrist's servants, that oppose Christ in this the day of his appearance. And though you may compel by force and cruelty, many to joyn with you in words, you do not make them renifled more the children of the Devil, and a thousand-fold more in a capacity to do you mischief; and truly such Christians you have enough already; and this was the way that your forefathers walked in whom God overthrew, and razed their Name out of the Land of the living.

I therefore boast not your selves over us, as if the Lord had forsaken us; because we have none in the Earth to take our part, or plead our cause; or as if your day should never have an end, or as if the Lord had no regard to his suffering people, nor took no notice of your cruelty towards them, for certainly, when we have filled up the measure of the sufferings of Christ that is yet to be filled up, and you have filled up the measure of your cruelty and hard-heart-

heartedness, the Lord will divide between cattel and cattel, and you shall not escape his fierce Vengeance and fiery Indignation; therefore in love to your souls do we send this, that you might be warned before it is too late; *for the wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all that forget God,* as the Scripture plainly declareth, and we cannot but be plain with you. And therefore fear the Lord ye Rulers, and give glory to his Name, for the Lords day is at hand, that shall burn as an oven, and the wicked shall be as thorns cast into it, *we wish you well and could rejoice to see you in that path that leads you to Gods kingdom, that your souls might find rest,* that the light of the Lord might be your leader, and you might be guided up to God, *is the desire of them who in scorne are called Quakers.*

*From the Gaol, the 22d of the
fifth Month, 1664.*

And the 31 of the 5th Month, called July, William Armoror came again to the Meeting, and took seven Women and Maids, viz. *Bridget Smith, Eliz: Bradbridg, Anne Watson, Anne Sharp, Eliz: Wright, Eliz: Dee the younger, and Sarah Austell,* and caused his Clerk to make a Mittimus there present in the Meeting-room, mean while *William Armoror* his man, *John Venter,* knowing that *Tho: Curtis*, his Wife and Man-servant, were all Prisoners, went and opened a door, and went into the house, (there being only a Maid-servant, and one man of the Family, not very well in his chamber, having taken something that morning) and went up stairs, meeting with the Maid, bid her not be afraid, and asked her if there were any in the House more then the Family? who answered, No; of which he informed his Master; being gone out of doors again, the Maid lockt the door; in a little time after, his Master, *William Armoror,* went and knockt at the door; the Maid being in a fear, her Master, and Mistress, and Man-servant being all in the Gaol, did not open the door. But *William Armoror* pull'd some kind of Instrument out of his Pocket, and pickt the Lock, entered the house, and searched from room to room, and under the bed, until he came where the man belonging to the House was, and asked his Name; he told him his Name

Name was *Joseph Coale*; and being asked where he dwelt, answered, That he dwelt there, and that he had lived there for seven years at times, and that it was the place of his abode: So *William Armorier* began to turn about, as if he would have gone away; but his Man *Venter* turned to him, saying, Sir, this is he we were informed of: His Master said, Is this he indeed? Sir, said *Venter*, this is the man, this is *Coale*. Then *William Armorier* took him by the arm, and bid him come with him: *J. C.* said, Whither must I go? Gol (said he) o Gaol. To Gaol! (said *J.C.*) for what? what have I done? *W. Armorier* said, I will tell you for what; and being pulling of him down stairs, said, Will you take the Oath of Allegiance? *Jos.* said, Why dost thou ask me such a question? I am known in the Town, having served an apprenticeship in it, and am a free-man of it, and have not been used to swearing; but if thou canst convince me by sound reasons and arguments, according to the Scriptures, that I may safely, and not break Christ's command, I may do it. But *W. A.* said, Ile send you to Gaol, and the e you shall convince your self; and so put two lines more in the Womens Mittimus, for refusing the Oath of Allegiance to His Majesty, &c. and sent him to the House of Correction with the seven women before mentioned, by *John Creed Constable*, who in a short time after dyed; and the next day *W. Armorier* sent for *J. C.* and asked him the same questions, and after some discourse about the lawfulness and unlawfulness of Swearing, sent him back again to the house of Correction.

Upon the second day of the sixth Month, called *August*, *William Armorier* came again to the Meeting in a violent manner, and took one man, and seven women, viz *William Teet*, *Anne Ball*, *Mary Slade*, *Mary Emerton*, *Elizabeth Lavell*, *Katharine Edsol*, *Ellin Binfield*, and *Margery Richardson*, and sent them to the House of Correction.

And the 14th of the same Month, *William Armorier* came again, and though there were but two men and one woman, viz *Benjamin Coale*, *John Trayard*, *Hannah Webb*, as he judged, above the age of sixteen years; yet those three, (contrary to the Act, which allows of four to meet) he sent with a Mittimus, the substance whereof was, For being at an unlawful Meeting, &c. by *Thomas Coates*, Constable to the House of Correction; and while the Clerk was making the Mittimus, he went to the house of *Thomas Curtis* again, and

and finding the door lockt (the maid being gone to carry some provision to her Master and Mistris in prison) he pickt the lock, opened the doors, and went into the Court; the door of the house being lockt also, he pul'd out his pen-knife or some such like instrument to cut the key-hole, that he might come at the lock, to open it, till a neighbour that was desired to look to the house in the maids absence, came to him, and told him there was no body in the house, and asked him what he did mean to break folkes house up, and pick the locks, and much more to that purpose? for he had been in the ware-house, where was much cloath, and one that saw him go, bid him take heed, for if any thing were lost, it might be laid to his charge; then he (the said William Armorer) said to the Woman in great wrath What have you to do with it? where is that whore? (meaning that maid-servant) and said he would have her to morrow; the woman answered, she was gone to carry her Master and Mistris some victuals for ought she knew; and having spoken very much to him for picking of the Locks, and what he had done; he was very angry, and asked her what she had to do with it; who answered, she had to do with it, for she was to see that no body did steal any thing out of the House.

The 25th of the 6th Month called August, William Armorer sent for the four men from the House of Correction, to witt, Jo: Coale, Benjamin Coale, William Teet, John Gray, and Tho: Seikes the Mayor, being with them; they asked them if they would take the Oath, they desired to know for what they had lain so long in the House of Correction: But they taking no notice of that, after some discourse, and many railing accusations breathed out by William Armorer, they committed them to the Gaol; and the same day the women being sent for, they put Fines on them; for non-payment, they sent them back again to the House of Correction, there to remain till three months were expired.

Upon the 28th of the same month, William Armorer came to the Meeting again, and took four women, and caused a Mittimus to be made for them, viz. Anne Harrison, Hannah Emerton, Katharine Woodard, and Judith Smith, and sent them to the House of Correction, though there were but four, which according to that Law, by which he pretended he proceeded, was a lawful Meeting, &c. and at the same time he struck a young Lad, who was under age, with a great

great Cane, and another time pull'd him by the Nose, so that his Nose was much swelled: And farther, he said, he would have the man and maid of Thomas Carris to morrow, or else the Devil should take him; which though he performed not, yet in some short time it came in part to pass; for he having sent T.C. and his Wife and man-servant to prison, and being kept close prisoners, T.C. sent into the Countrey for another man that was formerly his Apprentice, to look to his shop; and though he came not to the Meeting, yet his enmity and malice was so great against T.C. and that Family, that the 31 of the same Month, he sent two Officers with a Warrant, by force to take the man servant out of the shop, and bring him before him; for he had provided a snake for him, and had gotten Thomas Strikes the Mayor, (who hath been very active also, in this work of cruelty) and being brought before them, they asked him if he would take the Oath of Allegiance: To which the said man, Rob: Peacock, answered, I am a peaceable man, and have wronged no man, and cannot break Christ's commands, but can promise to be true to the King, and will be content to suffer the same punishment, if I break my promise, as they do who swear and break it: But notwithstanding, the Mayor, and William Armorer, caused a Misdintus to be made, and sent him to Gaol a so, and the same Officers asked a Neighbour where the Maid was, that he might have insnared her also; for William Armorer had said (if not sooner) but a little before, That he would send the Maid to Gaol, (or he would be hanged) and nail up the doors, that there should be no more meetings.

And the same day was three women brought before W. Armorer, from the House of Correction, who told them they were fined for being at a Meeting; and although the Act said five pounds a piece, yet he had fined them but five shillings a piece; and asked them if they would pay it? One of them, Anne Harrison, said to him, Thou hast got our house already, that we built, and hast taken away our means, and wouldest then have me pay more money, when I have broke no Law? He wrose but four above the age of sixteen years, and the Act says it must be about four. William Armorer said his man told him they were six, and two of them run away, one was Frances Kent, the other Pidgions maid. It is false (said Anne Harrison) there was Frances Kent, but she was fetcht out of Town, (being a Midwife) and as for the other, she was not there; there was but four. W. Armorer said, I shall have

Adrs. Kent, and then let the best Lady in the Land want her ; she shall not go, except the King or Court send for her ; but said he could make as good a M. awife himself, as she : So he sent them back again to the House of Correction, being committed for three months , but released them in two weeks after.

On the 18th of the 7th month , called September, --64 , William Armoror came to the meeting , and took one man and five women , viz. Christopher Cheestman , Anne Sharp , Hannah Webb , Bridget Smith , Hannah Emerton , Judith Smith , and being brought to his own house , before himself and Tho: Stikes , they fined them twelve pence a piece ; for non-payment of which , he told them he would send them to the Gaol , and make them pay their Fees , which would be more ; so he sent them to the Gaol , but they were released the next day .

The 4th of the 8th month , called October, --64 , the Sessions for the County was held at Newberry , to which place about fifty Persons , and some of their Wives (who being all Prisoners upon the account of the Oath of Allegiance) were brought , and being called to the Barr , an Indictment was read against them , for obstinately refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance ; and the Clerk (one Champion) had sworn that it was tendered to them at Abingdon , though many of them had never denied to take it , and one was not so much as asked whether he would take it or not : The Prisoners being informed that William Armoror , and Tho: Stikes Mayor of Reading , supposing that the late Act , which saith , If any man shall refuse to take an Oath in any Court of Judicature , being lawfully tendered (except Court-Leets) shall be transported &c. supposing they would refuse to take the Oath , might have made short work with them , and to have run them all on this hazard , to be rid of them all at once ; and the Judge of the Sessions , a bad man , one Procter of Windsor , gave in his Charge , That it was treason to refuse the Oath of Allegiance . But the Indictment being read , they pleaded not guilty ; some of their Adversaries supposing (as some of the Prisoners were informed) they would not have pleaded , and so they might have taken them as Mutes ; but having pleaded , and desired a Copy of their Indictment , some of the Justices said , God forbid but they should have it : yet Procter the Judge would not consent to it , till he had been at London , and asked the Lord Chief Justice Hide , (as he said) and if he

he said they should have it, and the Law would afford it, they should have it : Then one of the Justices asked him, *Whether they were not admitted Council in such a case?* He said, Yes. Then said the Justice, *How can they advise with Council, if they have not a Copy of their Indictment?* So the Prisoners sent one (being a Councillor) after them for a copy of their Indictment, and *Champion* the Clerk demanded 21 l. 13 s. 4 d. before he could grant it; but with some importunity it was gained for 1 l. 4 s. for one man and his Wife. And after the first were called, the other six that were committed since upon the same account, were called; being asked if they would swear, they desired to speak something concerning their commitment, and how illegally *William Armoror* had proceeded against them, one being taken out of his Masters Shop, another out of his Chamber not being well; another poor man out of his Shop from his labour; the others for being at a meeting where three were together, &c. but they would not admit them to speak, but soon put them by, and they were all sent back again to the Gaol.

Again the 6th of the 8th month, called October, —64, *W. Armoror* came to the meeting and took five women, viz. *Anne Sharp, Fra: Kent, Eliz: Streeter, Anne South, and Sarah Binfield*, and sent them to Gaol with a Mittimus for one night : But while he was in the meeting-room, a neighbours Wife perceiving the doors of the house of to be unlockt, went and locked a door, and carried away the key; which when *W. Armoror* came to understand that one had lockt the door, fell a swearing like a mad man; and a little time after they were gone out, they shut the street-door, the Womaos daughter bringing the key of the inner door, *W. Armoror* his man *Venter*, by violence took it from her; but the street-door being shut, he could not get in : Then in great rage *W. Armoror* called for something to break open the door; and some Hammer or Sledg, or such like thing, being brought, they went about to do it; but others persuaded *W. Armoror* (to pacifie him) that there was another way into the House.

The 23d of the same month came *W. Armoror* again to the meeting according to his usual manner, and took three men and six women, viz. *Christo: Cheeseman, Ranold Avey, Tho: Hint, Mary Weston, Eliz: Die Widow, Jane Hussy, Judith Smith, Katharine Edsell, and*

*Eliz: Lavell younger, and committed C. Cheseaman on the third account, though it was but his second, and accused them of carrying of Letters about the Countrey, and then came together on that day to plot, &c. But when they came to have their trial, then that is not mentioned; but the main businels is to prove they were there to worship God, or to seek God, or to seek Christ, &c, and this is the crime for which they proceed against them to Banishment, (as will more fully appear by the following Relation) and not a word of plotting then when they come to the proof: And the rest were sent to the House of Correction for forty eight hours, *Iho: Curtis* his maid-servant being one of them: So that the whole Family were now prisoners, the maid being taken out of her masters house.*

The 6th of the next month, called November, 1564, *William Ar-
morer* came again to the meeting and swore there was a goodly com-
pany, and caused the children to be pulled out, and with a staff
that had a goad, or some sharp peick at the end of it, pricked some
of them, that they were very sore and black where he pricked them;
and took one man and six women, viz., *Eliz: Hix, Amy Harriman,
Rachel Capt, Hannah Emerton, Mary Sanders, Alice Miller, Mary
Winter*, and sent them to the House of Correction for three dayes.

And the first of the tenth month, called Decemver, 1564, *William
Armorer* came again to the meeting, and caused the children to be
pulled out, telling them he had a stucke at home that he had, forsooth,
would make them feel him, which was supposed to be the same with
which he prick'd them before, being under age, he could not have
his will in imprisoning of them: Others of the children he threat-
ned to have sorely whipt, and having curried them going, took two
ancient Women, *Bridget Smith, and Mary Raby*, and sent them to the Gaol on the third account, and sett four, viz., *Ayme
Hart, Margery Symonds, Grace Hutchins, Jane Hussey*, to the House
of Correction for twenty four hours: And being not satisfied when
he had got them in prison, but would have had the Gaoler put them
in one room together, and no body to come at them, and what pro-
visions was brought them, should be put in at the Grates, and hath
caused their papers to be taken from them, pretending they had sent
a Paper to the King and Council, which was very false.

(19.)

And now we come to the proceedings of the said William Armoror, and the rest of the Justices at the general Quarter-Sessions held in Reading for the County of Berks, the tenth, eleventh and twelfth day of the Eleventh Month, called January, 1664.

The Justices being come into the Town, the morning before they sat, a Paper was sent (by one of the Prisoners) to them to read; but being refused by W. Armoror, who would have had it burnt, it was sent to the Court, and delivered to the Cryer; which W. Armoror perceiving it, cryed out, Burn it, for it should not be read; and therefore it is thought meet here to be published: A true Copy of which here followeth.

Friends,

IT will be a good and precious thing, To have the fear of God before your eyes, and therein to act in all things towards all people; and then you will act in righteousness, and do the thing that is just, if in the fear of the Lord you stand, and are exercised therein in your proceedings; for it is that which makes men honourable, and in Ages to come to be had in renown by the generation of the righteous, and the memory of such who in the fear of the Lord do act in their day in Justice and Righteousness, shall live fast ever; while the Name of the wicked shall rot, and be blotted out from under Heaven, who have had no regard to the fear of God, neither hath Equity and Justice have had place in their hearts; and such shall eat the fruit of their own doings, and receive a just reward from the hands of the Lord, according to their work; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of all mens hearts, and search out the hidden things of darkness, and then shall every man be rewarded according to their deeds done in the body, whether they be good, or whether they be evil.

Wherefore Friends, the Lord hath put it into my heart to write unto you, and that I may be clear in his sight, and that the neglect of such a thing may not lie upon my Conscience as disobedience, I say unto

unto you, Be considerate and sober in your minds, and calmly and seriously weigh what you are going about, and let not rashness and envy oversway you, because that the God of Heaven takes notice of your proceedings, and your actions are registered in a Book of Remembrance: But let Justice be your Rule, and let the Law of Equity be your Guide; let the Light of Jesus in your hearts and Consciences, be your Counsellor; because if you start aside from that, and act not according thereunto, you cannot please God, nor do the thing that is justifiable in his sight; but you will bring guilt upon your Consciences, which no man upon the earth shall ever acquit you of; and the sentence of condemnation you will certainly feel, by the Spirit of the living God, which judgeth righteously, without respect of persons: And to lye under that guilt and sentence from the Lord in your own hearts and consciences, will be sad and heavy indeed; for a wounded conscience, who can bear? If the Lord wound men inwardly in their consciences, because of transgression against his righteous Law of Equity, who can bind them up, or heal them? Will the saying, *we have a Law, and by our Law be (the just) ought to dye, or suffer?* Will this ease them? Oh no! that will not remove that weight and burden from off their consciences, which they do bring upon them by acting and walking contrary to the Light or Law of God in their own hearts; and because of this, the Lord often brings shame and confusion upon men, and dishonour and a curse in all ages hath attended and followed those that have been found in that way of afflicting, troubling, disquieting and persecuting innocent and harmless people, because of the exercise of their Conscience towards God, and for their obedience unto his requirings. And do ye think to gain honour, if ye proceed against us in afflicting of us because we cannot transgres the Royal Law written in our hearts? I tell you no, for we are a people that desire to spend our dayes here in this world, in the fear of God, and to follow him in all things which he doth require of us, to keep his Commandments and his Statutes, and to worship him according to his mind, in spirit and in truth: And this is all we desire, (which is our right and priviledge, as we are free-born people in this our Native Country). That we may have liberty so to do; but if for so doing, and nothing else, we must suffer, (as ancient Christians have done), we are content, knowing that the Lord will plead our

our cause, and will care for us ; and we cannot deny him to please men, but must still to our lives end, serve and obey him , and wait upon him, and worship him in spirit and truth, having engaged our hearts so to do, in that he hath made known himself to us , and by his Eternal Power redeemed us out of the world , and the sinful ways thereof , and shed abroad his love in our hearts ; and we are perswaded, and do know of a truth, That the Lord hath been, and is with us in this his way which we now walk in ; and can you in reason and equity expect that we should deny that way in which we have found the Lord to satisfie and refresh our souls, and to make our hearts glad ? Or is it doing as you would be done by ? Would you think it right to be persecuted and afflicted for walking in that way which you are perswaded in your selves you ought to walk in ? If not, do you fulfil the Royal Law , which is , To do to others as you would be done unto ? Wherefore, consider betimes, and have not a hand in afflicting of innocent people because of their conse-
nences : But break off your sins by righteousness , and your inqui-
ties by shewing mercy to the poor in spirit , and afflicted people of
God, who suffer at this day for no other thing, but for keeping the
commands of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for his Worship : For what
is the matter ? Who have we hurt or wronged in any thing , that
here is such furious and unchristian-like proceedings against us ?
And if our Adversaries have nothing against us, but because of our
obedience to the Law and Worship of our God, is this such a crime
at this day, that honest people for so doing should be so eagerly and
violently proceeded against , and that snares and traps should be
laid to catch and ensnare them ? Well, the Lord takes notice of
these things, and he will arise for his own Name and Seeds sake,
before whom the Mountains must bow and tremble , and the high
places of the earth which stands in his way, shall be removed , and
the Lord God will cut his own way thorow them , before whom all
Nations are but as the drop of a bucket, and as the small dust of the
ballance, and they that strive against him , cannot be blessed . And
therefore be wise and considerate ye Rulers of the Earth, lest ye be
found opposing of , and striving against that Eternal God that gives
us all life and breath , and a being here in the world, who will be
too strong for you, if you shall think in your hearts to stop and li-
mit his appearance in the hearts of his people , and bind the Con-
science,

Science (in which it is his Right and Prerogative to rule, and no Mans upon the Earth) from following the Lord in what his Light leads and draws it unto, which will be Usurpation and great sin charged upon you in the day of the Lord, when you shall come before the Throne of his Justice and give an account unto him; Wherefore, kiss the Son, stoop and bown unto the Light of God's Son which appears in your hearts, and convinceth you of sin, least the anger and indignation of the Lord be kindled, and flame and break out like devouring fire, and burn in your own hearts so as it can never be quenched.

Here are many of us Prisoners in this Gaol, and have been long, (which is not unknown to you) both men and women, and almost some whole Families, and several Aged People, many, because we cannot break the Command of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, who hath said unto his Followers, *Swear not at all*, because he leads them (and keeps them) out of the strife, and out of sin and wickedness, into Love, Peace and Truth, from which mankind was degenerated, when the swearing came in; which was to bind the conscience, because they were gone, and erred from the love and truth of God, in the heart, which Christ our Saviour restores into again, and says unto such, swear not; for truth binds them, and their yea is yea, and their nay is nay; and because we cannot break this Command of Christ, we are ensnared, and do suffer at this day, and many may be exposed to utter ruin in this world, because thereof, and the guilt of the ruin of innocent people and families, may come upon you, if in a rash and unchristian-like spirit ye run on against them, (which may be in your power to prevent) the sufferings and cryes of whom will enter into the ears of the Lord God of Sabbath, who will hear and have regard thereunto, if men do not regard, and will recompence those that trouble his, into their own bosoms.

And others here are that suffer for worshipping God in spirit and truth, according to the Scriptures, who cannot forsake the ancient Doctrine and practice of the Apostles, who exhorted true Christians not to forsake the assembling themselves together; and we cannot but perform that Christian and innocent duty, for which occasion is fought agaist us, by such as have given way to that spirit of enmity which always appeared against the way and worship of the true

true God, which such that are joined unto, will feel their reward and portion with ; and their inhumane and illegal proceedings may in time be more fully and manifestly declared and laid open to the world.

Now are these things worthy of such strait bonds, and close imprisonment, even to the endangering the lives of your peaceable Neighbours, who have not done any man wrong ; but because of the tenderness of their Consciences towards God, they must be thus used, so that hereby at least their health in the outward man comes to be impaired, by reason of keeping in, and being kept from their honest Callings and Employments in the Creation ; so that these things tend to the destruction of men, women and children, and civil commerce among men, and only because of their faithful obedience to the Lord, in what they are persuaded in their hearts unto by his Eternal Spirit, and constancy in his way, which they can never deny, whatever they suffer in this world ; neither can any of these things (I am persuaded) seperate us (who have truly and experimentally tasted thereof) from the love of God which we feel in Christ Jesus, in whom we have the assurance thereof unto our souls.

Wherefore I say , Oh ye men in Power and Authority in the world , Be cool in your minds, and let the cause of the Oppressed and Afflicted people of God, be pondered by you , and take heed of turning your hand against them ; for if you do make that your work, To root out and destroy them, it will be too hard for you, and your eyes shall never see the accomplishment thereof ; but if some or many of us do seal our testimony with our dearest lives and blood, yet will the Lord raise up more in the same power and spirit, to bear witness unto his Name in the same way in which we serve him, and you will be found fighting against God, till he be provoked to anger against you, if Justice and Mercy be not shewed to them , and ye shall not obtain mercy and favour at the hand of the Lord , which that you may, is my desire, who desires the good and salvation of your immortal souls, and not your destruction, and am, a true Friend to Justice and Righteousness, and those who are exercised therein, and suffers with the despised people of God, for the Testimony of a good Conscience.

*From the Gaol in Reading, the
16th of the 11th mon: 1664.*

In the morning, the 11th day of the month aforesaid, about fifty Prisoners were called to the Barr, of which were about eight of the Baptized people; an Indictment was read against them for wilfully refusing the Oath at Abingdon, the 12th of July, &c. To which at Newberry they had pleaded not guilty: The Jury being sworn, they were going to swear Champion the Clerk; but Tho: Curtis desired to speak a few words before he took his Oath, being granted, said, Whereas there was an Indictment read against us for refusing the Oath of Allegiance, when the Oath was never tendered us; for the Statute saith it should be tendered upon the Evangelists, and it is the opinion of the Judges, That it must be read to the party, otherwise it cannot be a lawful tender; as for instance, about three years since, Capt. Pecke, with divers others, being called at an Assizes before Baron Turner in this place, the Judge asked him whether he would take the Oath of Allegiance; Capt. Peck told him he was not committed for refusing that, but was taken at a Meeting. The Judge replied, I do not read it to you, I do but ask you the question; for if I should read it to you, you would be in danger of a Preliminary, &c. And this is our case, we were not committed at first for refusing the Oath of Allegiance, but were taken at a Meeting; and when we expected to have our Trial according to our Muster, they asked us whether we would take the Oath, but it was not read to us; for the first of us that was called, they were very angry with about his Hat, and never so much as asked him whether he would take it. The next that was called, was no Quaker so called; and he coming before them bowing, with his hat in his hand, they asked him to take it, and he did take it; but then was not I, nor forty more of us called to the Barr, as we can prove by many witnesses: Another thing is, the Indictment ought to comprehend the whole Oath; but this is false in many places. Then one Proctor a Counsellor, and a Justice so called, being on the Bench, stood up, saying, As to your being taken at a Meeting, the Court takes no notice of that; you are here indicted for refusing the Oath of Allegiance, and the Clerk hath sworn to the Indictment: And whereras you say, the Oath was not read to you, you say false; for I my self was at Newberry Sessions, and the Oath was read to you there: Then several of the Prisoners cryed it was false, it was never yet read to them: Proctor asked whether the Indictment was read? T.C. Yes. Then said Proctor, The Oath was in the Indictment. T.C. That matters not, that was the Indictment, and no

(25)

Legal tender of the Oath to us; for we declare in the presence of God, That the Oath was never read to us; and you do us much wrong; you ought not to deal so hardly by us, you ought to help the Prisoners at the Barr; instead of which you are set against us.

Procter said, It is for my King and Country.

Jo: Kemboll, one of the Prisoners, replied, He did not believe the King did desire to enrich himself with the undoing so many poor men and their Families.

The Judge of the Sessions, *Edward Dolby*, stood up, and asked *William Armorer* again, Whether it was not read to us? Who answered, Yes.

Then *Tho: Chelton*, one of the Prisoners, called to him to come off the Bench, being a Witness against us. Which he did, and swore that the Oath was read to them all, and that they were called one by one; and so returned on the Bench again, and sat as one of their Judges.

And *Champion* the Clerk swore also to the same purpose.

But the Prisoners still denied that it was tendered to them; but were interrupted.

Then *Procter* stood up, and said, You Gentlemen of the Jury, I desire you to take notice, Here is Sir William Armorer, a Person of Honour, and Mr. Champion, the Clerk of the Peace, have sworn, That the Oath was read to them all. Now you must either bring in these men guilty, or else you will make these two, (William Armorer and the Clerk) perjured persons.

One of the Prisoners, *Richard Billingby*, said, I am here indicted, and another with me, for refusing the Oath of Allegiance the same 12th day of July, at Abingdon; and I was not called till the 13th day, after *W. Armorer* was gone out of Town; and yet he and the Clerk have taken their Oaths, That it was there tendered to us all, (they being put in the same Indictment) but I was not so much as called that day, (as the Reader may see by the foregoing Relation.) But they would have waved that.

T.C. desired the Court would take notice of this thing, That these two men were indicted in this Indictment for refusing the Oath the 12th of July, when as they were not called that day at all; and though *W. A.* and the Clerk have sworn that we were called to the Barr particularly, yet they were not called that day; and *W. A.*

went out of Town early the next morning before the Court sat, and they were not called in two hours after he was gone, and therefore the Indictment was false.

Then the Judge said to *Champion* the Clerk, Did you call these men particularly? and did you read the Oath to them?

Clerk. I did call them particularly to the Barr by their Names, and the Oath was read to them, upon which many of the Prisoners cryed out it was false, it was false.

But said a Justice on the Bench, Were they called before the Oath was read? or was the Oath read first, and they called after?

The Prisoners cryed, That is the Question.

Then said the Clerk, I must speak the truth, I cannot well tell, but the Gaoler gave me a Note of their Names, and I called them particularly: But whether it was read to them before or after they were called, I cannot tell; but if I had thought they had been so critical, I would have been more careful.

A Prisoner said, Take notice of that, Jury.

So the Jury went forth, and staid not long, but brought them in not guilty.

So the Cryer demanded money of the Prisoners for the Jury, and the Court broke up, being adjourned till the afternoon, and our Friends departed, being cleared by the Jury; only the Gaoler told several of them they must appear again in the afternoon.

The Court being sate again, several of our Friends appeared, but being informed by some, that they intended to insnare them again, and being cleared by the Jury, they went out of the Court, as judging they had no reason to stay to be ensnared by such as had enmity against them, most of the moderate Justices being gone.

But *Theo: Curtis* and his Wife, *Geo: Lamboll* and his Wife, and three Friends more, being called, they appeared, the rest being absent, the Justices threatened to fine the Gaoler for those that were wanting, saying, Did we not give you Order to stay them? Who answered, As soon as I heard your Order, I run down the stairs upon my faith, but they were gone.

T.C. said, I suppose they would not have gone away, had they known your Order. But being cleared by the Jury, they thought it was sufficient; and I myself was gone, not intending to come again, but

but when they told me I was called for, I came again; for I am not ashamed to shew my face, nor afraid of any thing that I have done; and I know *W. Armorer* his man *Venter*, is warrant enough to take me at any time.

Judg. Though the Jury did clear you of that Indictment, yet they could not clear you of your Obedience.

Then the Clerk reading over their Names, they called for *Thomas Heisfield*.

T. C. said, That is a man that hath served the King faithfully, and hath many cuts in his head, and wounds about his body, that he received in the Kings Army, yet he is regarded no more then others, though he fought and ventured his life for the King; and being somehow to make conscience of an Oath, must be ensnared with the Oath of Allegiance.

Then *A. Curtis* was called.

T. C. answered, Here is another whose Father laid down his life, and suffered death for the service of the King; yet she also must be ensnared with the Oath.

Then they called for the Statute-Book.

T. C. said, We see your snare well enough; it is not the part of men of Honour to seek to ensnare those whom the Jury hath cleared; but these things will appear as a blot in your Scutcheon: We do believe you aim to ensnare us, and it is our Estates you seek after, and it is well if some of you have not begg'd them already.

Then *Procter* the Councillor stood up in great rage, and bid the Clerk read the Oath to them.

T. C. said, Be not so hasty, for thou didst but a little time since, charge these two men (pointing to *William Armorer* and the Clerk) with being perjured; for thou toldst the Jury, That either they must bring us in guilty, or else these men were perjured; and the Jury brought us in not guilty. And thou need'st not be so fierce now, for the time was, when thou wast as fierce in *O. Cromwell's* dayes.

Then the Judg bid the Clerk read the Oath; being done, asked *T. C.* if he heard t, who answered yes. So they held the Bible to him.

He told them he could read them a better Lesson in that Book, if they would hear, having the Book in his hand. They bid him say after

after the Clerk, who read the Oath ; which he did till he came to that clause, *And I do swear, &c.* Then he said, But I do not, for I cannot swear ; but what I have said, I do helieve, and question not but I shall prove as good a Subject to the King, as some of you. So they bid the Gaoler take him away.

Then *GEO: Lamboll* was called. They asked him whether he would take the Oath of Allegiance ?

Who answered, As to the Oath of Obedience he could promise very much, and he should keep his promise, though some did repute us as lyars.

Then *Sarah* his Wife was called to the Barr : They asked her if she would take the Oath ?

She answered, At present she was not satisfied that she might safely do it, or to that purpose.

And the other three Friends, being called, they asked them the same question.

T. Tudway asked, Whether it was better to obey Christ, than them ?

They said, That was not the Question.

He told them he could not swear. The others answering to the same purpose, they were taken away.

Then *A. Curtis* was called to the Barr : One of the Justices said, *Come Nan, I know you will take it.*

A. C. Yes, if thee or any one could convince me that I might lawfully do it, and not break Christs command, who hath said, *Swear not at all.* And being asked the same question often, answered to the same purpose as before.

One of the Justices said, *But the Apostle said, That an Oath for confirmation endeth strife.*

She answered, That Christ the everlasting Oath of God, who puts an end to strife, him I know saith, *Swear not at all.*

William Armorer being on the Bench, said, *This is the old time.*

A. C. It was before thee wast, and will be when thou hast no being.

They still continuing to ask her if she would take it, answered, Yes, if any one could make it appear that I might lawfully do it, and not break my peace with God in my Conscience.

But they asked her again, and bid her answer if she would take it or

or not. Who replyed, I shall give no other answer. So the Gaoler took her away.

The same day at night, *Tho: Tudway* one of the Prisoners, living in the same Town, having been to see his Wife and Children, as he was going to Gaol again, overtook *William Armorer*, and having passed him, he called, and sent his man, and stayed him, and asked him why he did run away from the Sessions.

T. T. said, I did not, but am going to Gaol, for I am a Prisoner, and thou hast nothing to do with us, for we are the Gaolers Prisoners, and we were all at the Sessions, and that was sufficient; and said it was hard measure that he might not go see his Wife and Children.

Justice *Brown* being present, said it was; but you must be obedient to the Laws.

W. A. said, You must take the Oath; an Oath for confirmation endeth strife.

T. T. said, But I am not in strife; for I can say, notwithstanding thou hast kept me this forty weeks unjustly in Prison, the Lord forgive thee; and thou wast best have a care what thou dost to us, for thou must give an account for thy bad deeds.

W. A. said, You shall see as the day of Judgment, whose arse will be blackest, yours, or mine.

Prisoner said, Those words doth not become a Justices mouth. So he sent him to the Gaol.

The next day, being the 1st day of the month, the other six Friends, viz. *Joseph Coale*, *Rob: Proctor*, *Benj: Coale*, *William Teet*, *Rich: Green*, and *Jo: Tracy*, were called to the Barr, and *Tho: Bartlet* also, who was freed by the Jury the day before. The Clerk having read the Oath of Allegiance, the Judg said, *Joseph Coale*, What say you, will you take the Oath of Allegiance?

J. Coale said, I have something to say to the Court, and desire I may be heard—was interrupted by *Procter*, who said, Will you take the Oath, till you shall be heard?

J. C. I have something first to speak concerning my taking up, and commitment; for I was in my Friend, *Tho: Curtis* his house, being hot well, and *W. Armorer* pickt a lock to come to me, and pull'd me out of my Chamber—was interrupted by *W. A.* who called him Rogue, &c. Upon which one on the Bench pull'd him to be quiet.

One

One of the Prisoners said, Those words did not become a Justice on the Bench.

Judg. Well, what say you, will you take the Oath, or not? We will not hear you of such things now.

J. Coale said, Why, are you ashamed to hear of picking the Lock, and such illegal proceedings? You ought to hear and do Justice, as you are Magistrates, and not to hide and cover such things--was interrupted.

Judg. Give him the Book, will you swear or no?

J. C. I would have spoken of my taking up, and known for what I have been kept in Prison all this time, but seeing I cannot be heard, I shall speak as to the Oath. Indeed I have not been used to swearing; but if you can satisfie my Conscience that I may lawfully swear, and not break the command of Christ my Saviour, I may take this Oath: The Book being given him, he was turning to the fifth of James; and W. A. cryed, Oh, he is going to the fifth of Matthew; and called the Gaoler to take him away.

Then R. Pocock was called.

Judg. What say you, will you take the Oath of Allegiance?

R. Pocock. I desire to speak something concerning the manner of my commitment--but was interrupted by the Clerk, who said, he should answer first whether he would take the Oath.

R. P. Thou art not Judge of the Sessions, therefore hold thy peace.

Justices. Will you take the Oath of Allegiance?

R. P. I desire to know whether it be in love to the King, or to insnare me, that it is tendered to me? For when I was committed to Prison by W. Armorer, and Tho: Stikes Mayor, W.A. said he did believe I was a peaceable man.

W. A. said, I do believe so still.

R. P. If my word may be taken instead of swearing, I can promise to be true to the King; and if I break my promise, let the same punishment be inflicted upon me, as on them who break their Oaths.

So the Gaoler took him away, and Benjamin Coale was called.

Judg. What say you, Benjamin Coale, will you take this Oath that was read to you?

B. Cook said, Was it read to me? I did not understand it, for I am but a young Lad, and unacquainted with these things?

Judg. Shall we read it again to you?

B. C. I suppose that I am a Prisoner; and was I brought here to have Justice? or to be ensnared? I desire the Court would hear me a few words concerning my commitment at first, which was not upon this account; but I was first committed upon the account of the new Act, and I have been informed, That those that are taken upon that account, ought not to be ensnared by any other.

Judg. Well, that is nothing; will you take the Oath, or no?

B. C. I desire to know for what I have bee: this long time a Prisoner?

Judg. We take no notice of your being a Prisoner; you are here, will you take the Oath? give him the Book:

B. C. Do you own this Book? (having it in his hand) at which they were offended, and cryed, Take him away, he deserves to be whipt.

But he desired the Court to take notice, That he did not refuse the Oath; but if they could prove by the Scripture, that it was lawful to swear, he would swear.

Then the Gaoler took him away; and William Toot was called.

Judg. William Toot, what say you? Will you swear?

W. T. The day of the Lord is come; therefore I rather chuse to obey God, then man.

Judg. said, It is enough. And Richard Green was called.

Clerk said, Will you take the Oath?

R. Green. I desire to know for what I have lain half a year in prison? (He being taken out of his Shop, being a poor man, and having a Wife and Family to maintain by his labour.)

W. Armorer answered, For refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance.

R. G. I fear you do not know what an Oath is.

Some of them said they would make him know what it is, asking him again if he would take it.

R. G. said, If you can convince me that I may do it, and not break the command of God, I will take it.

W. Arm. It is written in the Scripture, That an Oath is the confirmation of the truth.

R. G. said, Christ is the Oath of God ; and to witness Christ in me, is the confirmation of the truth ; and he commands me not to swear at all.

Judg. Will you take this Oath, or no ?

R. G. I cannot swear, but do not deny Allegiance to the King. So the Gaoler took him away, and John Tracy was called ; and they asked him the same question as the former ; who answered, That he could not swear, &c.

Then Thos: Bartlet was called ; they asked him if he would swear. He answered, He had learned better than to swear.

The Clerk bid the Cryer give him the Book ; and he would have read in the Book.

But they said, He must swear.

He answered as before, he had learned better.

Now when this Thos: Bartlet was taken at the Meeting, W. Armorir accused him of Plotting and Rebelling against the King ; but when he had got him in another snare , that was no more mentioning ; and said he made breach upon breach upon the Kings Laws, because he did not put off his hat when he was brought before him, and that he workt on holy days ; stamping his stick on the ground, said, By his trash he should go to New-England for it.

Now we come to the proceedings at the same Sessions , the same 12th day of the 11th Month, against four others of our Friends, viz. Christopher Cheseaman, Anne Sharp, Bridget Smith, and Margery Richardson, who were taken at a Meeting , and committed upon the third supposed offence.

Being brought to the Town-Hall , expecting to hear their Accusers, they were not called, nor suffered to come in the hearing of the Court, but kept at the lower end of the Hall several hours , the Justices having little to do , but the trial of these four persons , it being the third day of their sitting, and most of the Justices being gone ; and having kept the Prisoners several hours, they sent them to prison again, and the Court adjourned till the second hour in the afternoon, the Grand Jury being gone out , waiting for the Witnesses some hours, which were John Venter, W. Armorir his man , and Rich: Grover his Clerk , Hugh Smith, Daniel Seamer and his Son; which Witnesses being sworn , were very much different in their

Evi-

Evidence, some saying they saw them at the Meeting, but heard them say nothing, nor do nothing, but only that they were there.

The Court being sat, the Cryer called for the Grand Inquest, who appeared, and brought in their Verdict *Ignoramus*.

Upon which W. A. mo^re rose up from his seat in great rage, saying, *I will come off the Bench, and swear against them, and will break my Oath, That I have found Christ: Cheeseman twenty times at lewelling;* and when I came, he would tell me there was not my number: So I was fain to wipe my nose, (wiping his finger then on his Nose,) *and return back like a Coxcomb as I went,* and thus I have been plagued with him: and I will take my Oath. That when I have asked them vostimes what they did at the meeting, they have told me to wait upon the Lord, and to seek God, &c.

Then Pritchard said, If that can be proved that they have confessed they were there to seek or wait upon God, it is enough; and would have encouraged the Jury to find the Bills upon it.

Oh abominable, unheard of wickedness and cruelty, that to wait upon, or seek God, should be accounted such a crime, as to deserve no less punishment than seven years banishment or dead at self!

Well, but W. A. mo^re his man *was* being called, and beginning to speak, his Master, W. A. said to him, *Jack, you muste the 23d day of the Month?*

His man answered, *It's no matter for the day of the month, I know the time well enough.*

Upon which a squarer by said, *A Rogue, does not know hardly of the month. He deserves to be kickt out of the Court:* And the people fell out into great laughter.

At^t so the Jury went forth the second time: the Jury still scrupling the business, could not agree to find the Bills.

And so, Armes rose off the bench in great rage, and took his Oath, and then went into the Council Chamber to inform the Jury: So that there was only the Judge, Edward Dilke, and one Justice *Poole*, left on the bench. Another being sword *is a Welsh*, and whether they two could make a Juries, neither of them being of the *Englyssh*, no doubt but they entred.

Well, now thit standing the Jury returned the second time, and brought in *Ignoramus*. to this Oath was no record, and so the Jury was and blunst *Yea* (as also blunst *Nay*) in this blot much grimed *Blot* *Blot* *Blot*

Upon which Procter began to be very angry, saying to the Jury, *Would you do so, having such Evidence, and Sir William Armorour an honourable Gentleman, having taken his Oath also?*

The Jury answered, 'Twas true, Sir W. A. was an honourable Gentleman, but was a man subject to passion.

Procter replied, saying, *If he were, it did not become them to tell him so.*

Then W. Armorour prest the Judg to have them fined ten pounds a man.

The Judg answered, No, if that were their judgment, between God and their own Consciences be it.

But W. A. prest to have them bound to their good behaviour, because they had some scruples concerning his swearing, being as they said, tender in conscience touching so dubious a matter, and did question whether they might take his oath or not; for it may be observed, that Procter himself but the day before did tell the Jury, that if they did not bring in the Prisoners guilty, they would make W. A. and the Clerk perjured persons; and the Jury did not bring in the Prisoners guilty, &c.

So the Prisoners being cleared by the Jury, the two Justice on the Bench, and W. Armorour not being pleased with it, committed them to the Gaol again as factious persons, till they should pay their fees. So the Sessions ended.

And the next day, being the 13th day of the Month, W. A sent for the four Prisoners before mentioned, to his house, where three of them were brought by the Gaoler; but one of them being an ancient weakly woman, having taken cold the day before, by reason of their being kept so long at the Sessions, it being very cold weather, and not being well, was left behind: Which when W. A. understood, he began to be very angry, and bid the Gaoler fetch her, though on Horse-back.

So the Gaoler fetcht her also, and having kept them about two hours, being very cold weather, nothing was said to them, but were returned back again to prison.

The 16th day of the same month, they were had before him again to his House, where was also Tho: Kenton Mayor. W.A. commanded Grover his Clerk to read the Oath of Allegiance to them, which being done, told them if they would take it, they should have their liberty.

They

They answered, that they were Prisoners by an Order of Sessions, till they would pay their Fees, and therefore would not answer to any such questions until they were at liberty.

And after some discourse, they were committed again for refusing the Oath, &c.

And the 28th of the 11th month called February, ---64, they were sent for again before W. Armorer, who told them they were as they were before; if they would pay their fees, they should have their liberty.

So when they came out of his house, the Gaoler bid them go to their own homes.

And whether these proceedings be according to Law, or mens wills, the Reader may judge; but we are sure the innocent suffers.

The 22^d of the 11th Month called January, ---64, W. Armorer came to the Meeting, and took Joan Willesby, Mary Winter, and Mary Richardson, and sent them to the house of Correction for three dayes, upon the second offence, as he calls it. And there being six men more, viz. William Lamboll, William Tompson, Leo: Key, Anthony Sadler, Tho: Speed, and John Bowlt, he pull'd one of them down by violence from his seat, and sent for the Gaoler, whose servant came, whom W. A. commanded to take them to prison, which was done by his man Venter, and the Gaolers man, who haled them to the Gaol without Warrant or Mittimus.

The next day he sent for the six men to his house, where he, with Tho: Kenton the Mayor, asked them if they would take the Oath of Allegiance; and called to Grover his Clerk to read it.

One of the Friends, W. Lamboll, asked, to what end do you require me to swear?

W. A. said, To be true to the King.

W. L. Is swearing Allegiance sufficient, though I do it not?

W. A. said, No you must do it.

W. L. said, It seems doing Allegiance is the thing that is required.

He answered, Yes.

W. L. I own Allegiance to the King, and am willing to do all his just and lawful requirings, as a Subject, in things pertaining to this world, and will promise thereunto.

W. Atmorer, You will swear to bind your self if you break your Oath you are damned.

W. T. Will not the breaking of my promise be matter of condemnation to me?

W. A. answered, No, or to that effect.

W. L. said, The Scripture saith, that no Liar shall enter into the Kingdom of God; and the Devil shall receive damnation for lying.

But still he asked me to swear?

I told him that Christ and the Apostles forbid swearing; and the succeeding Christians denied to swear, as Polycarpus and others: And swearing upon a Book was set up by the Antichristian Power; and first the Emperor was the first Institutor of it, as I read of; and I will add nothing to the King, for me to kiss this Book; neither will it do him any good: And therefore why should it be put so much upon me, seeing I will do Allegiance?

W. A. said he could not help it; and bid the Gaoler take him away if he would not swear; and said he might go and convince the Parliament that made the Law; and he was sworn to execute the Kings laws.

W. Lamboll asked him why he would put such Laws in execution, which he could not defend by the Scriptures nor right reason?

Then he bid the Gaoler take him away.

W. L. said, The Lord God everlasting, (in whose presence I am justified in this thing, and before whose Judgment-seat we must all appear) knoweth my heart, that I do not deny to swear out of stubbornness, nor out of obstinacy, or denying Allegiance to the King; but only and alone for Conscience sake towards God, and because Christ Jesus (whom we are to hate in all things) saith, Swear not at all, &c.

The Oath being read to William Tompson, and the Book held to him, said, Alas, is this all that ye can do, so often to tender us this Oath to infare us? And that he did own what was read, and could promise the things contained in the Oath.

The Clerk having given him the Book, he said, Out of this Book can I prove that it is not lawful to swear at all.

W. A. said, That is in your communication.

W. T. Nay it is not at all, whihc are Christs words to them that were followers of him, I say unto you, Swear not at all, which comprehends

prehends all swearing ; but let your yea be yea, and your nay nay ; for whatsoe'er is more, cometh of evil.

W. A. began to be angry with him, because he did not answer whether he would, or would not swear.

W. T. I can promise the things contained in the Oath, and is not that sufficient?

Mayor said, *That doth not answer the Law.*

W. T. If I do that which the Law requires, or the substance of the Oath, it will not be accepted.

W. A. being peevish and angry, thrust him going, he crying for Justice, W. A. told him he should have it done.

W. T. appealing to the Mayor for Justice, he said, *William, I am in place to do the Kings business, and so execute his Laws, and I must do it.*

W. T. said, But thou must have an eye to the Law of God in it.

The Book being held to *Tho: Speed*, he said, I chuse rather to obey that Christ which you profess, who said, *Swear not at all*, then you who say swear.

W. A. *Will you? that's enough, take him away.*

T. S. Is this thy Justice, to command me to be taken away to prison for saying, I chuse rather to obey Christ than thee ?

Then they asked *John Boult* if he would take the Oath of Allegiance ?

Who answered, As for my part I am a man that makes conscience of my ways, and I have great cause to respect the Lord, and to eye his way and truth ; and as he hath made it known in me, I shall in that truth follow him in his holy way ; and that which he hath made known to me to be evil, that I dare not do, lest I should break my peace with my God, which I cannot do for all the world.

W. A. You cannot take it, can you ?

J. B. I cannot go against my Conscience, nor do that which the Lord hath made known to me to be evil.

W. A. said, *VVhere did you learn that, out of your nail ?* (the Friend being a Shoemaker by Trade.)

J. B. reproving of him for his jeer, said, Nay, the Lord hath made it known unto me.

Some other discourse passed between them, which we have omitted; and the other two also had some discourse to the same purpose.

On the 12th of the first Month called March, 1665, **W. Williams** Armorer came again to the Meeting, and sent for the Gabler, who being come, he sent **Leonard Coale**, **James Lavell** and **W. Walter Emerton** to the Gaol without either **Wharram** or **Mitimus**. And at the same Meeting took **Christopher Page**, **Henry Adams**, **Anne Sharp**, **Margaret Whitheart**, **Anne Godard**, **Ash Whiteman**, **Eliz. Lavell** the younger, and **Mary Marthew**, and sent them to the Counter, and then went into the house of **Tho: Curtis**, and pulled out his Man-servant **Henry Cross**, and put him into the Meeting-Room, and said he run away out of the Meeting (though the man was never at our Meeting all his life-time, as we heard of) and so sent him to Gaol, and at night he sent for them all to his house, where was Justice **Dolby** also, and tendered the Oath of Allegiance to **L. Coale**, **J. Lavell** and **W. Emerton**, and committed them to the Gaol, and told **Henry Cross** **Tho: Curtis** his man, that he was mistaken in him, and let him go again, the rest he sent to the Gaol for three days, except **A. Sharp**, who was committed upon the third Account.

The second of the second Month called April, 1665, came **W. Armorer**, and **Edw: Dilby** to the Meeting, and took **Christo: Cheeseman**, **Hannah Webb**, **Anne Harrison**, **Eliz: Tudway**, **Eliz: Den** the younger, **Dorothy Clarke**, **Hannah Kent**, and **Hannah Lamboll**; and being brought to his house by the Constable, **Samuel Housa**, he examined **H. Lamboll** and **H. Kent**, about their age, and being little; let them go; and sent the other five to the Gaol for three dayer, and **Christo: Cheeseman** upon the third offence.

The fourth of the second Month called April, the Sessions for the County of Berks was held at **Newberry**, to which place the Prisoners, to whom the Oath of Allegiance had been tendered, were brought, viz. **Tho: Curtis**, and **Ana his Wife**, **George Damboll**, and **Sarah his Wife**, **Tho: Tudway**, **John Paine**, **James Martow**, **Joseph Coale**, **Rob: Pocock**, **Benjamin Coale**, **W. William Tett**, **John Try**, **Richard Green**, **Thomas Bartlet**, **W. William Lamboll**, **W. William Tompson**, **Tho: Kry**, **Anthony Sadler**, **John Boat**, **Tho: Speed**, **Geo: Coale**, **James Lavell**, and **Walter Emerton**; and being brought into the Court, were

were called to the Barr , and the Oath was read to them , and the Court asked whether they would take the Oath of Allegiance ?

To which they generally answered , That for Conscience-sake , because Christ had commanded not to swear at all , they could not do it : but did offer to give under their hands , and promise that they would be true to the King , &c.

And one Friend , *Geo: Lamboll* , being permitted to speak a few words , said to the Court , That the Law by which they proceeded against us , was never made against a people that feared an Oath , and could not swear at all in any case ; but it was made against the Papists , who denied Allegiance to the King , and chose rather to bear the penalty ; for they owned Allegiance to another Power , which we deny , and have often declared it ; and do offer and promise Allegiance to the King , and to no other Power on earth , whilst we live under Him ; and would be willing to undergo the punishment of perjured men , if we break our Promise .

So they were put by , and committed to the Assizes , the Justices saying it was a thing too weighty for them : So they would leave them to the Judges .

And *Anne Curtis* and *Sarah Lamboll* were called .

They asked *A. Curtis* if she would take the Oath .

A. C. said , I look on it as a very hard thing that I should be required to take this Oath , being under covert , and my Husband being here a present Sufferer for the very same thing ; for there is no woman in *England* that I have heard of , under covert , that is required to take that Oath , and kept in prison on that account , excepting my self and *Sarah Lamboll* .

So after more discourse , they put her out of the Court , and bid her take *Sarah Lamboll* with her .

And upon *A. C.* her speaking a few words to the Justices , *W. Armorer* said , Hold your tongue , Nan , and turn your back .

And others of the Justices said , Go your wayes , *Mrs. Curtis* , out of the Court , and take *Mrs. Lamboll* with you ; by which they , and many of the Spectators , did judg they should have had their Liberty .

But after they were gone , *W. Armorer* (as some of the people said) began to incense the Justices against *A. Curtis* , telling them what a dangerous person she was to be set at liberty , &c .

So they ordered, that *A. Curtis* and *S. Lambton*, should be committed to the Gaol as dangerous and impious persons there to remain until the next Assize.

The next day, being the fifth of the Month, two more of our Friends, viz. *Christopher Cheeseman*, and *Anne Sharp* were called,

and two Witnesses called, viz. a *Daniel Seamer*,

^a This *D. Seamer* was so drunk the day before, that he abused several of the Prisoners, who being ignorant which hand to lay on the Book, his Master called to him, laying, saying, *by hand them after Lay on the other hand, Dick:* and being bated the Devil, were sent out to the Grand Jury,

who having heard their Evidence, returned into the Court, and their Verdict was, *They could not find any sufficient proof to find the Prisoners guilty according to the late Act made against Unlawful and Seditious Meetings.*

At which Verdict, *W. Armorer* (according to his usual manner, if the Jury did not do as he would have them) fell into a great rage, and began to threaten some of the Jury that they should be fined, and caused them to return again, farther to advise in the case.

But being recutied again, their Verdict was as before, "With divers sound reasons and arguments wherefore they could not find the Bill.

Notwithstanding the Justices put them to the poll, asking them one by one, *Do you find the Bill? &c.* How-

^b For when one would be as a Witness that the Prisoners said they were at the Meeting to wait upon God, one of the Jury answered, *Wait upon God? who should they wait upon else? should they wait upon the Devil?*

it, they past it by.

W. A. not being pleased with these proceedings, began to accuse the *Quakers* in venting most audacious and damnable lies, saying in the face of the Country, No body should ever catch them speaking or praying, for they set boyes at the corners of the streets, to watch,

watch, so that if any come to take them, they might have notice thereof.

Which being so notoriously false, no doubt the Country would give as little heed to it, as there was truth in it; and so we leave it. for we dare appeal to all people both in this Town, (where our Meetings are known, being publike this eleven or twelve years) and in Country, whether our harmless and innocent practises, especially in the Service and Worship of the true and living God, hath not been of more Christian courage, then to let boyes to watch if any body came to see us: No, no, we are far from that; for our Testimony in preaching and publishing God enduring truth, and our praying of so good effect and acceptance with the Lord, that we are neither ashamed nor afraid of any that shall come among us; and our daily practice, and his continual frequenting our peaceable Meeting again and again, (as the Reader may observe) doth sufficiently manifest the contrary.

Well, but to return: the Jury being very much threatned, and much stir because the Bill was not found against the Prisoners, there was some hurry in the Court; but the Prisoners had their liberty, and the Sessions ended.

Again, the 23d of the same Month, *W. Armorer* came to the Meeting, there being not five of the age of sixteen years, though several under age, with his Son and Servant, baled them out, and *Christopher Cheeseman* being there, he bid one of them cudgel Cheeseman out of the room, and as he was going forth, *W. A.* himself thrust at him with his Cane or Staff, and run it between his lips and teeth, there being not his number as aforesaid.

Moreover, *W. A.* meeting *Christopher Cheeseman* another time in the street, laid violent hands on him, and pluckt him by the Nose, and threatened if he catcht him at the Meeting again, he would cut off his Nose.

The 30th of the same Month, *W. A.* came again to the Meeting, and sent for *Tho: Kenton Mayor*, who being come, they took *Christopher Cheeseman*, *Anne Sharp*, *Sarah Binfield*, *Mary Coale*, *Grace Hutchins*, *Hannah Lamboll*, *John Kent*, *Tho: Conicke*, and *Hannah Wrenn*, and being had to the House of *Giles Pocock*, and having confest together, they sent *Christopher Cheeseman*, *A. Sharp*, and *Sarah Binfield*, to the Gaol on the third account.

W. Armorer still breathing out false accusations against them, that they carried Letters about the Country, and then met on that day to plot and contrive insurrections.

One of the Friends denying it, told him, if he could prove any such thing, they would be contented to suffer whatsoever the Law had provided in that case.

W. A. replied, *We will make you prove the contrary*: and told them of black strings and ribbons to tye about their arms, and such stories which are incredible to any man of gravity and understanding; and yet telling of it with such confidence, as if the man had been an eye-witness of that which was never to be seen: And one of the Prisoners counselling him to take heed what he did, for there would come a day wherein he must give an account for what he did: W. A. replied, *We shall know at the day of judgment, whose arse is blackest, yours or ours*.

The Prisoner told him it was an uncivil thing for one called a Justice, to speak such words.

He replied again, *VVhy Sirrah, what incivility is it? is not your nose your nose, and your arse your nose?*

So they committed Grace Hutchins for six months to the Gaol, and the rest for three months; the Mayor being the chief Instrument at that time, of their being committed for so long time, saying, *VVe will not be troubled with them so often*; it being in the Summer time, when many were thronged up together. After which, one of the Prisoners sent him a Letter, a true Copy whereof, here follows.

To

To THOMAS KENTON, Mayor of
Reading, These.

Tho: Kenton:

Friend, Thou art now in a place of Authority in this Town; and as chief Magistrate therein, thou hast power put into thy hand to punish evil-doers, and to favour, encourage and protect people in well-doing; which is the End of outward Rule and Authority in this world, which was never ordained of God to limit, stop or bind the Consciences of people to, or from any way of Worship, or practises of Religion; but it was ordained of God to punish the evil-doers, and to keep and preserve men in peace and quietness one with another, that they hurt not, nor wrong not one another, nor abuse themselves nor one another; but that they might be kept in good order one with another in all things outwardly, and not to rule over the conscience; but he, even God alone, is to rule in the conscience, and to persuade it by his Light therein, to, and in his own way and worship, and therein man is not to meddle, but to leave it free: And he that rules thus, he rules for God, and bears not the Sword in vain, which is to stop, limit and bind wickedness, and he abuses not the Power, nor will not turn his Sword (nor Power) against such as do well, and follows peace and holiness, and fears and serves the Lord, but will encourage, and be a praise unto such who do live peaceably and honestly among men; and though such may be falsely accused and reproached, (as the peaceable people of God have been in almost every age, and evil-minded men may furnisse evil against them; yet such a one who rules for God, (and not to please mens humours) will not afflict and trouble innocent and peaceable people, upon the suppositions of envious and evil-minded men, because he sees there is no (nor can be any) evil-doing proved against them, that they are guilty of.:

And

And Friend, if such a heart and mind were found in thee , thou wouldest be happy and honourable indeed . I say , if it were in thy heart thus to act even in that very way and manner before-mentioned , to look after , and punish evil-doers , and to stop and limit prophaneness and wickedness , to encourage and be a praise to those that do well , that are peaceable and harmless among men , that serve and worship the Lord in his own way , (and not after the inventions and prescriptions of men) even in that way which his own spirit leads and persuades them unto , then it would go well with thee , and thou mightest then know the worth and exceeding preciousness of having the peace of Conscience , if thou didst act in this way which is according to that of God therein , which would lead thee and all men to this , did they but give ear unto it , and follow its counsel , and then would wickedness be stopped , and godliness , sobriety and honesty , would be esteemed and promoted . But alas ! how doth the contrary abound in this place ? and how has wickedness its swing ? and how are evil-doers increasing , drunkennels , swearing , and vain sports and playes , allowed and tollerated ? And these are not accounted unlawful Meetings : But for peaceable people , young children and youth , that have inclination after godliness and sobriety , to meet together for no other end but to worship God , this is accounted an unlawful Assembly , (for there was never , nor can never any thing else be proved against us , what ever such as have enmity in their hearts against us , may imagine) and must now be broken . And in this work thou hast appeared , in causing thy Neighbours to be haled out of their Christian Assemblies , and sent to Gaol from their honest Callings and Employments , separating men from their Wives and Children , and Wives from their Husbands , and Children from their Parents , whereby they may be destroyed , and all this , only because of the exercise of their Consciences towards God , and for their obedience to him . And oh how heavy a burden will this be upon thee one day , that thou shouldest have a hand in this , and joyn with that spirit of Persecution against thy peaceable Neighbours , and young children , whom thou cauffst not but be persuaded in thy conscience , that they are peaceable , and intends no such thing as to plot against the King ; neither is it a likely thing to any judicious man , that a few Lads and young Girls , and a few women , should meet together to plot or contrive insurrections , and no such

such thing can be, & even will be prov'd against the people in scorn called *Quakers*, who are led by that spirit of truth which leads into love and peace, and good will towards all men, though evil reports and false accusations may be given out against us, and many foolish stories may go about among such as are given up to believe lies, which are incredible to a man of gravity and understanding; yet our innocency, uprightness and honesty, will appear, when all these things will dye, and the refuge of lies is swept away; and that truth, and way of life, peace, and eternal happiness, wh ch God hath made known unto us, will more and more be made manifest to be that way in which alioe true love, peace, unity and concord among men is enjoyed; and without the knowldg of which men can never be established in peace and unity, where no plotters nor contrivers of mischief against any man, can come; and which all that are out of parel not so be trusted, whatever they may in words and shew pretend; for such as do transgres against the Light of Gods Spirit in their own Consciences, and are unfaithful and treacherous wthm; will also in time be so unto men, though they may lawn and flatter for their own ends, all which we do utterly deny, and in our souls abhor, and which the Truth which we have received, trauiled and redeemed us out of.

¶ Wherefore Friend, it was upon my heart to caution thee to take heed what thou doft, was to proceed in this work of persecution of innocent people for the exercize of their consciences in the service and worship of God, and causing thy peaceable Neighbours to be cast into prisons for their obedience to the Lord God; for this will kindle the wrath of the Lord against thee, and be the cause of his heavy judgments to come and fall upon thee in the end, and sorrow and trouble will take hold of thee, when the Witness of God in thy own conscience shall bring these unchristian-like proceedings against those that did thee, nor no man wrong, into thy remembrance; and give the sentence of condemnation upon thee for connivance, and joining with the persecuting spirit, against the innocent, and such as fears and reveres his Name.

¶ And though now some may over-awe thee, telling thee there is a Law, and thou may think to cover thy self, by laying the Law is against us; yet I say, that will not excuse thee in the dreadful day of account; for there was a Law which the Jews had against our

Lord Jesus Christ, yet that would not excuse those that condemned him: But yet this Law doth not at all reach us, being rightly considered, because we meet really in truth to worship the Lord, and to perform holy duty to him, and not in any colour or pretence, to plot or contrive insurrections; for they that do so, are the persons that the Law takes hold of; and though some may suspect otherwise of us, yet that is not sufficient ground so violently to proceed against thy peaceable Neighbours upon a bare supposition, because it hath not, nor can ever be proved, that we have done, or intend any such thing at our Meetings; and therefore we are grievously wronged and abused, and the Law turned to a wrong end, even against them that are peaceable, and against whom it was not made, according to the Preamble of it.

And therefore it will be well for thee to be cool and considerate in thy mind, and not rashly to run (or be led) on without any respect to the Lord, or fear to offend and grieve his good spirit in thy self, which will not always strive, or without any pity or compassion (as a man) to thy Neighbours, to send them to prison, from their Wives, Children, Husbands and Parents, and Families, as if they were such intollerable offenders, that were not worthy of the common air in the Creation; when all that can be proved against them, is, That they were in such a house, and they said to wait upon, or worship God: And is this now become such a crime? Oh that ever men that profess Christianity, should be so blind and sottish, as to lose their very reason (as men) to act in this manner, which generations to come will even abhor. And who would have thought that the Magistrates and people of Reading should be found in this work beyond most in the Nation? What, is there not drunkards and swearers to be looked after? And do not these transgress the Law? Is there not a Law against drunkards and swearers? and art thou so forward and diligent to execute that, as thou (with others) art that which you say is against our Meetings? Are not such at liberty? And [are not] these things which are sins against the Lord God of Heaven and Earth, winked at, and lightly passed over? And must those whom you do only suspect (or some of you) to be transgressors of mans Law, be so violently proceeded against, when nothing of fact can be proved against them, nor no man can justly charge them of doing any evil against him?

Con-

(47)

Consider of these things , and lay them to heart , and beware what thou dost , lest thou be found striving against that which God hath purposed to exalt ; and remember what one once said , *If this way be of God, it will stand*, let men do what they can ; and if it be not , it will fall of its self , they need not trouble themselves about it . And if you that profess your selves Christians , had so much reason and moderation as he that was a Heathen , you would not trouble your selves so much as you do , which will be in vain to strive against the Lord , who will exalt his own Name and Truth over your heads , though you may be permitted to try many , in which the Lord is trying of you in this your day , which it would be well if you could see , which you can never do till you return your minds to that Principle of God in you , which will let you see your selves , and how you stand , and convinceth of sin , and leads out of it all such as do sincerely love and follow it ; and all such as do slight and disregard it , it will be a worm gnawing in their Consciences , and a fire that will never be quenched ; which will make the proud to bow , and consume and lay low the glory and haughtiness of all flesh , and bring eternal sorrow and anguish upon all that have lived wantonly upon earth , and spent their time in pleasure and vanity , in ease and fulness : The day of the Lord is at hand , which will overtake the wicked as a thief in the night ; and blessed will they be that hast and prepare to meet him , by putting off their sins , and turning from their iniquities , and forsaking the evil way ; which that thou mayest do , is my desire ; however I have cleared my conscience unto thee , and rest a true lover of thy soul .

Reading-Gaol the 3d day of
the 3d month, 1665.

*From a Sufferer for the testimony
of a good Conscience , and for
keeping the command of the Lord
Jesus , in which I have peace with
him , which no man can take awa-*

J. C.

H

The

The Assizes being holden at Abingdon the 7th and 8th days of the 5th Month called July, 1665; to which place Twenty six of the Prisoners were brought by the Gaoler, viz. The twenty one before mentioned, who at the Sessions at Newberry were put off to the Assizes to have their Tryal, and A. Curtis, and S. Lamboll, who were committed as dangerous and suspicious persons; and the other three were, Christopher Cheeseman, A. Sharp, and S. Binfield, who were committed on the third account for meeting, and were called to the Barr before Judg Ti-rell, who (after some quetions of Name, place of abode, what they were, &c.) said to the Prisoners at the Barr:

Judg. *What, you go to unlawful Meetings and Conventicles, and will not obey the Kings Laws, &c.*

One of the Prisoners answered, I am clear from all evil against the King, and of all Plots, and contriving Insurrections, &c. for our doors stand open, and our Meetings are publick, (not in holes nor corners) where any that will, may come.

So they were put by.

And having much ado to patch up an Indictment against Christopher Cheeseman, there being no record of his second offence according to the Act; for he was never taken and committed on the second account; being in a strait, they called for Christopher Cheesemans Commitment; which being given to the Judg, he asked if those were all the Commitments?

The Gaoler answered, Yes.

The Judg finding no second Commitment, turned to W. Armer, saying, *Your best way is to let him go, and take him again.*

Upon which Justice Alseworth stood up, and said to the Judg, If you let this man go, he will go about the County preaching, and do much hurt, before you can take him again.

So then they proceeded, and called the three persons before mentioned, and read an Indictment against two of them, viz. C. Cheeseman and A. Sharp; to which they pleaded, Not guilty.

Then the Judg called to S. Binfield, and asked what age she was? But she not answering, the Judg called out in the Court, saying, *Who knows what age she is of? No answer being made, he said to her, I think you are but fifteen years old; and by that time you are sixteen, I boy*

bore you will have more wit. So she was freed as under age, it being but the second time of her commitment, it was supposed they would not meddl any farther with her upon that account.

So the Indictment being read against the other two, which was very false in many particulars; as, *That Christopher Cheeseman, with other evil persons, to the number of five, did meet in contempt of the Kings Laws, and to the disturbance of the people, &c.* and much more of the same nature.

A Jury being called, some of whom were so drunk, that they were hardly able to speak or stand, but as they were supported by others in the throng.

Prisoner said, I desire there may be some Witness produced to prove that I go to any such Meetings to plot against the King, and that I have at any time been taken at such a Meeting; for we meet in the fear of the Lord, and our Meetings tend to holiness of life, and love and unity among our Neighbours; and this the Liturgy of the Church of England doth exhort men unto; and here is the Law (having it in his hand) which speaks positively to the matter, as in the last Clause of the Preamble to the Act, which shews the very grounds and reasons wheresoever the Act was made, viz. To prevent plotting and contriving Insurrections, as appears farther by the words of the Act, which saith, *I hat if any person of the age of sixteen years, shall be present at any Assembly, Conventicle or Meeting; under colour or pretence of any exercise of Religion, in other manner than is allowed by the Liturgy, &c.* (which doth allow, that in all places, and at all times men ought to perform holy duties to God, and to seek him, &c.) Now if any Witness can come and swear, That I was there upon such account, then let me suffer the penalty which the Act provides. Therefore I desire the Witness may be produced to prove what is falsely suggested against me.

Judg. *That is no part of the Law, the whole body of the Law followeth;* calling to the Clerk to read the Law; so he read that clause, *If any persons to the number of five, or upward, under pretence of tender Consciences, shall meet in exercise of Religious Worship, contrary to what the Liturgy doth allow, &c.* after lawful conviction of the third offence, sentence of transportation shall be given, &c.

C. Cheeseman. The Law doth not say, that people should not meet really to worship God; nor yet injoin them where, or what house

to meet in ; but saith, That if any persons to the number of five, or upward, shall under pretence of Religious Worship, meet to Plot, &c.

Judg. *That's no part of the Law.*

Prif. The Law was made to prevent plotting and contriving Insurrections ; that was the ground and cause wherefore the Act was made, (and nor, I hope, to hinder any people from worshipping of God, or to make them offenders for seeking him) so unless it can be proved, that I was found plotting, &c. this Act concerns me not.

Judg. *Here are the Registers under the hands of the Justices ; and here is Sir William Armorer, an honourable Gentleman, that is one of them.*

Prif. He is honourable, that is a virtuous man.

But the Reader may take notice, that there was no Record for the second offence ; for the Prisoner was never committed on a second.

Judg. *You are an impudent fellow.*

Prif. I am not an impudent fellow, but do speak the truth ; for *William Armorer* is a common Enemy to me, and hath used violence towards me divers times ; and he is a partial man, and therefore no competent Witness ; and I have much to say against him, and do desire that Witness may be brought forth, if there be any, to prove the breach of the Law ; for there are two principal clauses in the Act, upon which you ought to insist for tryal of me. The first is, Whether it can be proved, that I under pretence of tender Conscience, did meet to plot against the King, and contrive Insurrections among the People. And secondly, Whether I did meet, and was found exercising in Religious Worship, contrary to what the Liturgy of the Church of England doth allow.

Judg. *I tell you, That the Clause in the Preamble of the Act, is no part of the Law.*

Prif. 'Tis the very ground and substance of the Act and Law made against unlawful Meetings ; Such that under pretence of tender conscience, do meet to plot against the King, &c. But ours is no such Meeting, neither hath there been any witness from first to last, to prove any such thing against me.

Judg. *We have witness here, if need be, (looking about him in the Court) but none appeared.*

Prif.

Prif. Take heed what thou dost, for it is the Cause of God, and matter of Conscience towards God only, for which I am this day called in question.

Judge said, 'Tis no matter for Conscience, but for disobeying the Kings Laws.

Prif. I do affirm as in the presence of the Lord, That 'tis matter of Conscience only, and nothing else; and there is no proof of any thing to the contrary.

Judg. Well, Jury, you bear how 'tis, and what the Law saith, That upon proof made before the Justices against such offenders, shall be sufficient Conviction; and here are the Registers (though there was no second offence) under the hands of the said Justices.

Prif. You that are of the Jury, I know not the faces of any one of you, therefore I leave it to you without any exceptions, desiring that you would take notice, That 'tis matter of conscience only; for the Law saith, That if any under pretence of tender Conscience, shall meet to plot against the King, and to contrive Insurrections, or to exercise in Religious Worship contrary to what the Liturgy of the Church of England doth allow, &c. So that there ought to be proof made that I was found (under the aforesaid pretence) plotting &c. and exercising in Religious Worship contrary to what the Liturgy doth allow, &c.

Judg. You of the Jury, you have heard what he saith; they would be interpreters of the Laws, and spiritual things too: you bear what the Law saith, That if any persons to the number of five, or upward, shall meet together in exercise of Religious Worship, contrary to what the Liturgy alloweth, upon proof thereof made before the Justices and Registers under their hands, (but here was neither Witnesses, nor but one Register of the first offence; for there was no second, as is said, and therefore the Judge would have had *W. Armoer* have let him go) shall be sufficient Conviction. Jury, go together.

But the Jury went not from the Bar, neither did they call to see the Register under the hands of the fore-mentioned Justices, nor yet for any other witness or testimony, whereby to be satisfied concerning the Prisoner, but rather like drunken men, not valuing the Liberty or life of a free-born English man.

In a small time, the Judge having them near him, said, Jury, what say you, Guilty or not guilty? And two or three of them answered, Guilty.

Judg.

Judg. *What have you to say for your self, that sentence of Transportation may not be past against you?*

Priſ. I have much to say for my self, and for the Cause for which I am this day called in question; for 'tis the Cause of God, praised be the Lord who has judged me worthy to bear testimony to his Name this day—

The Judg called to the Clerk to read sentence.

So the Clerk took the Act, and read that Clause which saith, That such offender being lawfully convict, shall be transported beyond the Seas for seven years; and if he return before that time be expired, to be proceeded against as a Felon, &c.

The other Prisoner, *Anne Sharp*, pleading also, That there was never no witness from first to last, appeared to their faces to prove a third offence. Howbeit, she was also sentenced to lye in prison twelve Months, being a woman under covert. So were both returned to the Gaol.

The other twenty one prisoners, who were by the Justices at their Sessions, ordered to the Assizes, were brought to the place aforesaid, in order to their Tryal, were not called, but returned back again to the Sessions, which was holden the 11th day of the same month, at the same place; and the proceedings was much on this wise, viz.

Anne Curtis, and *Sarah Lamboll* being called, nothing was laid to their charge of danger and suspition, as was mentioned in the order of Sessions; but they tendered the Oath of Allegiance again to them, and returned them back again to the Gaol.

The next day, being the 12th of the month, the twenty one prisoners upon the account of the Oath, were called to the Barr, and an Indictment was read against them, (*Tho: Holt of Abingdon* being Judg) to this purpose, That they had wilfully and obstinately refused the Oath of Allegiance, &c.

To which the Prisoners pleaded Not guilty, and demanded a Copy of the Indictment, but never had it. So the Gaoler had them back again to the Gaol.

Again the 23d of the same Month, *W. Armorer* came to the Meeting, and *Tho: Kenton Mayor*, and took *Eliz: Tudway*, *Mary Winter*, and *Judeth Smith*, and sent them to the Gaol on the third account, though it was but *Eliz: Tudways* second. Also sent *Joan Dee*

to the Gaol for six months. And *Hannah Emerton*, *Ellin Binsfield*, *John Walker*, and *Henry Day*, to the House of Correction for three months.

The 27th of the 6th month, called *August*, 1665, *W. Armorer* and *Edward Dolby* came to the Meeting, and took *Eliz: Kemboll*, *Hannah Kent*, and *Mary Lamboll*, and sent them to the Gaol on the first account; and *Thomas Conicks*, *Joseph Phipps*, and *John Thorn*, to the House of Correction; *Thomas Conicks* for six months, the other two for three months.

The third of the eighth month called *October*, the Sessions was held at *Newberry*, to which the above-named *Eliz: Tudway*, *Mary Winter*, and *Judeth Smith*, were brought; the Bill being found against them, they were indicted on the third Offence, so called, and having pleaded Not guilty, were sent back again to Gaol, and to be tryed the next Sessions following.

And the 9th of the 11th Month called *January*, 1665, the Sessions was holden at *Reading*, where *Anthony Barker* of *Sunning*, sate as Judg.

The same evening before the Court broke up, the Clerk (*Champion*) called to the Gaoler to bring the Quakers in the morning; and *W. Armorer* bid hem get a good Jury.

Accordingly the next morning early they were had to the Town-Hall, and called to the Barr, all the twenty one Prisoners, except *John Paine*, (who could not go, being sick in his bed) and a Jury was pickt according to *W. Armorer's* desire, one *Charles Belwood* being one, who was formerly *W. Armorer's* Coach-man, *John Austin* the Shootmaker, and *Daniel Seamer* the Taylor, *William Page* the Glover, and one *Cooper*, commonly called a Conjurer, and some others like them, and one who is a Papist, (as the people did inform us) but the Prisoners objected against some of them; for one of them, *Daniel Seamer*, had said in open Court, at a Sessions held at *Newber*, That he hated them as he hated the Devil: But Justice *Pamer* of *Oakingham*, said, Unless you will take your Oaths of that, we will not put any of them out of the Jury, though he knew they made conscience of an Oath.

So he, among the rest, stood in the Jury, which were their Judges, and the Indictment being read, That they wittily and obstinately refused to take the Oath of Allegiance, mentioned in the third of King

King *James, &c.* The Prisoners pleaded, first, That there was no Statute did empower them to tender them this Oath. Secondly, That it was not the Oath mentioned in the third of King *James*, because they tendered it to them by the Name of King *Charles the Second*. Thirdly, That it was not according to Law; for the Law saith it should first be tendered to them out of Sessions; and the ground of such tender should be upon some presentment or complaint from some Ordinary, or others, and then a tender in Sessions, and that by the major part of the Justices.

All which things, and much more, as in that case is proved in the Statute, ought to have been first, which hath not been to us.

Then stood up *Edward Dolby* a Councillor, saying, That if two Justices had power to tender it out of Sessions, they had, no doubt, as much power to tender it in Sessions upon complaint, &c.

One of the Prisoners bid them take notice it must be upon complaint: But it was not so tendered to them, but as a snare, after they were cleared by the Jury, knowing that they could not swear in any case.

Much more the Prisoners had to say, but they would not hear them, but called to *Champion* the Clerk, and one *Staples* a Councillor, to swear that the Oath had been tendered to them according to Law.

Being done, the Jury went forth. Being returned again, the Judge asked if they were agreed on their Verdict?

Who answered, *Yes.*

He asked, Whether guilty, or not guilty?

To which the Fore-man answered, That so many as the Oath was legally tendered unto, and they refused to take it, so many were guilty.

Then *William Armorer* and the Clerk said, It was legally tendered to them all.

One of the Jury, *Charles Betwood*, replies, *Yes, yes*, then they are all guilty.

But many of the standers by said it was a special Verdict, the Prisoners not being suffered to come to the Barr to hear it, and one of the Prisoners being sick in his bed at the Gaol, as before is said.

So the Court being adjourned till after dinner, and being come together again, they called the Prisoners to the Barr to hear their sentence; but some of the Prisoners told them, they did not understand that the Jury had brought them in guilty, but they would not hear them. And one of the Prisoners told them he had an Arrest of Judgment. But the Judge, *Anthony Barker*, said, They had time enough for that, and then said, *Hear your sentence.*

Because you have refused the Oath of Allegiance, and the Jury hath found you guilty, you have incur'd the Penalty of a Premunire.

And after some words spoken by the Prisoners to them, they were had away to the Gaol, for they were resolved to do their work, if not with the Law, without the Law, and their reward accordingly they shall receive; and the Judg, *A. Barker*, is since dead.

But the same day, by the same Jury, *Eli: Tudway, Judith Smith, and Mary Winter*, were tryed upon the third account for meeting; and though it could never be proved that *Eli: Tudway* had been twice convict, yet had *W. Amoray* and *Thos: Seikes*, set their hands and seals that they were all upon the third account.

Upon which *Eli: Tudway* (knowing the thing to be false) sent presently a Messenger to *Tho: Seikes*, to know whether ever he committed her to prison while he was Mayor. His answer was, he could not tell, but if his hand were to it, it must needs be so.

The Prisoner speaking something concerning their unjust proceedings against her, the Clerk, *Champion*, said, she deserved to have her mouth stopp'd with a handkerchief.

So the Jury brought them in guilty; and the Judg, *A. Barker*, passed sentence against *Mary Winter*, and *Judith Smith*, to be sent to Barbadoes, &c. and that *Eli: Tudway* should lye in prison twelve Months, being under covert; the Judg being in some chafusion, would have sentenced her for time of life, had it not been preyent-ed by some that stood by.

The next that were called, was *A. Cartis, S. Lamboll, and Robert Wilson*, who was fetcht out of his own house in Newbury, at a Sessions time, and had to the Court for opening his shop windows, on one of their Fast-dayes, whom they also enquired wch the Oath of Allegiance. And being indicted for wilfully and obstinately refusing the Oath of Allegiance, &c. they pleaded Not guilty; and the Clerk asked them whether they would enter their Recognizance?

One of the Prisoners asked, What they did mean by it?

The Clerk answered, The Court is willing to favour you, and to let you have liberty till next Sessions, giving Sureties.

The Prisoners answered, They had no Sureties; but if they would take their words, they would promise to appear if they were well.

Which not being taken, they were returned to the Gaol.

The next day a sufficient man of the Town (hearing that the Court had proffered to let them have their liberty upon Security, till the next Sessions) went to the Clerk of the Sessions, and proffered to be their Security till the next Sessions; that is to say, for A. Curtis, and S. Lamboll.

But the Clerk told him he could not do it without an Order under the hands of two Justices of Peace.

So he went to W. Armorer, but he would not take Sureties for them.

The 14th day of the same Month, W. Armorer his man came to the Meeting, and seeing Friends meet together, went out and pull'd the door after him, (the Meeting being in a room next the street) it being a spring-lock, catcht; so he lockt himself out.

In a little after, his Master came in great rage, and called to Friends to open the door, or else he would break all the Glass Windows. But the Friends in the Meeting like still; for as they had no hand in shutting of him out, they were not willing to let him in. Upon which he called for a Smith and a Sledg, there being Randolph Thornberry the Constable, and one Richard Davis, that uses to attend on the Butchers, and some others with him; the Sledg being brought, with many blows they forc't open the door, and W. Armorer looking in, said, He is not here: Whereby it appeared, that he had information of some person that was not there. So having set some to keep the Friends in the Meeting, he went to an inner door of the House of Thos: Curtis, and broke that open, and searched the Court, the Wood-house, Brew-house, Stable, and Hey-loft, and then broke the door into the house, and after that, broke another door to go up stairs; and finding one Chamber-door lockt, though the Key was in it, yet he broke the lock and the door to pieces, and entred into the room, and searched all the house from the bottom to the top, no body being in the house, the Maid-servant being

being gone to prison to carry Necessaries to her Master and Mistress. What was lost, is unknown, excepting a knife and a bolt. A stander-by affirms, That Whitcher the Taylor, Daniel Steamer his Son-in-Law, told him, That they went into the house to search for writings, and to see how the house was furnished. Having broke open six doors, and searched the house, came forth again to the Meeting-room, and caused the Friends to be had to the Counter; and after their Worship was ended (it being the first day of the week, which they call their Sabbath, on which day he usually doth this work) he sent for them to his house before himself, and Edw: Dolby; and because three of the Friends, being young men, did not put off their hats to him, he (W. Armorer) called to his man to fill them with water; the man not doing it presently, he gave him a kick on the breech: Then his man took the Hats, and filled them with water. W. Armorer bid him set them down full on the ground, being done, said, Now let them put them on their heads. But the Constable threw the water out, and gave them their hats again, it being very cold weather.

Then W. Armorer called the young Maidens, whom he took also at the Meeting, and stripped up their sleeves, and asked them if they had any black strings or ribbons: And having done, let them go. So caused a Mittimus to be made for the three young men, viz. Joseph Phipps, Henry Adams, and John Thorne, and sent them to the House of Correction for six months, and sent Anne Webb to the same place for three months, and Anne Sharp to the Gaol for three months, and in some dayes after, he sent privately for that Mittimus, and charges that she should not see or know of it; and sent another Mittimus for Anne Sharp to be kept a Prisoner for twelve Months.

The 15th of the second Month called April, 1666, came W. Armorer and Edw: Dolby to the Meeting, with Kanold Thornberry, Constable, where was Robert Paine, Anne Haste, Hannah Emerton, Eliz: Tindway, Marg Webb, Mary Kent, and Sarah Kent; and after many words, W. A., bid the Cookstable take them to the Counter.

One of the Friends said, there was not the number Five of age.

He said, he would take them if there were but one of age, if there were four children; and said it was the Chancellors Judgment.

And being had to the Counter (the Town-Prison) after their Worship was done, he committed Hannah Emerton to the House

of Correction for six Months, *Robert Paine* for three months, and *Anne Hais* for six months, to the Gaol; and *Eliz. Tidway* for twelve months, and then said, he would make all them that were under the age of sixteen years, pay twelve pence a piece.

The 24th of the second Month, called April, 1666, *Anne Curtis* and *Sarah Lambell* were laid to the Sessions at *Newberry*, in order to their tryal; but *W. Armorer* not being there, they were not called. *Anne Curtis* speaking with divers of the Justices at a private house, relating the manner of the proceedings against them, demanded of them a Trial, being brought for that end; and if the Jury did find them guilty, they were willing to suffer; if not, they should clear them.

And after some words, they bid her withdraw.

And meeting with Justice *Doleman* in the street, who knew her, she related their case as to the other. He answered, He would go to the Lord *Loveless*, and the Justices, and tell them her business, and bring her word what might be done.

And after some time, he came again to her Lodging, and told her, That the King's Evidence was not ready, and therefore they could not have their Trial: and that the Justices thought it an unreasonable thing that they should be put from Sessions to Sessions, and still kept in prison; therefore you may have your liberty, giving your words to appear the next Sessions.

To which she answer'd, We proffered our words to appear, the last Sessions, and it would not be taken.

He replyed, But it will now; and that they did intend to write a Letter to Sir *W. Armorer*, to that purpose.

So she said, If they would have us to appear, We shall, if well, and at liberty.

So they returned to *Reading*, to their own Houses.

But the next day *W. Armorer* sent the Gaolers man to fetch them in to prison again. The man told W. A. That the Justices had given them liberty till the next Sessions. At which he was very angry, and replyed, What have the Justices to do with MY PRISONERS? and threaten'd that he would lay him by the heels, if he did not fetch them in.

So he fetcht in *S. Lambell*; but *A. Curtis* was gone with her brother toward *Bristol*, to see her Relations; and at her return, hearing that

that he was angry with the Under-keeper, she went to him, telling him of it, viz. That she heard he was angry with the Under-Gaoler because he had not fetcht her in; and that she would not have any one have anger for what she did; and thought she went in her own right, as having liberty from the Justices till the next Sessions.

W. Amor answered, 'Twas no such thing.

To which she replied, she knew nothing but what he they call Sir *Thomas Doleman*, told her, repeating to him what he had said to her at *Newberry*.

Then *W. A.* said, If she would give security, she should have her liberty; if not, he would send her to her Husband.

A. Curtis replied, I perceive it was the rest of the Justices desire, we should have our liberty, but thee only opposest it.

And he answered, Yes, it is I; and said the Justices did it in opposition to him, (and yet this man all along pretended great kindness to her for her Fathers sake.)

Much more was spoken, too much here to mention.

And a few dayes after, he sent *Rosold Thonbrey*, Constable, with a Warrant, to apprehend her, but not being at home, mist her at that time.

The 19th of the 4th month, called *June*, 1688, *John Withram* the Under-Sheriff of the County, with one *Thomas Rose* the Duke of *Monmouth*'s Tutor, came to the Gaol, and called for *Tho: Curtis* and *Geo: Lamboll*, and told them they had a Warrant from the King to seize upon their Estates; and presently *Gev: Tho: bry* and they two went into their Chambers, and seized on all their Books, Papers and Writings, and on 150 £. in money of *Tho: Curtis's*, (there was more money lost in his room, it was judged about fourteen pound, but they laid they had it not) and when they came down again, they locked them out of their rooms, and went to the House of *Thomas Curtis*, and looked over his Cood, and seized on it; and then went to the House of *Geo: Lamboll*, and did the like there, and took an Inventory of all they could find; but did not remove the Goods, for they promised to be accountable for them.

The same day *W. A.* sent *Edward Lawrence*, Constable, with a Warrant to apprehend *A. Curtis*, and had her presently away to the Gaol.

And

And some time after, he sent to the Gaol for A. C. and being come to him, he told her, That the Gentlemen who were concerned in her Husbands Estate, desired me to set you at liberty; and here is your discharge, giving it into her hand. A true Copy whereof, herein after followeth.

Burgus de Reading in Com. Berks.

To the Keeper of His Majesty's Gaol for the said Burrough, and to his Deputy and Deputies there, Greeting.

These are in the Name of the Kings most Excellent Majestie, to charge and command you immediately upon sight hereof to set at liberty and free the body of Anne Curtis, Wife of Thomas Curtis, of this Burrough, Woolen-Draper, out of your custody, and from her Imprisonment. Dated under my hand and seal the 22d day of August, Anno Dom. 1666.

W. Armorer,

The 29th day of the fifth Month called July, (66) came *W. Armorer* and *Edward Delby* to the Meeting again, and looking into the Meeting, left his man at the door, and went into the Houise, and searched from Room to Room and under the Beds, pretending that some were gone out of the Meeting, and found onely four of age, sent two of them to the Gaol, and the two other, viz. *Joseph Phipps*, and *Hanah Kent*, he sent to the House of Correction, *I. P.* for three Months, and *Hanah Kent* for six Months, and demanded of *Lydia He farr*, *Mary Kent* and *Sarah Kent*, Twelve pence a piece, for not being at his Church that day, they being under age, for not paying of which, he sent them to the Gaol, where they have been prisoners above twelve Months; and another Child, *Eliz: Whithart* being taken with them at the same Meeting, having but one Arm, a Neigh-

a Neighbour having told him that her Father was dead, and that it was judged the cause of his death, was his being kept long in Prison, through (*W. Armorer*) his means, in the extream cold weather, at last he let her go.

The 19th of the 6th Month called *August* (66) *Anne Hatt* (who was committed for six Months, onely for being at a Meeting, to wait upon, and Worship the Lord in Spirit and in Truth, being kept in, in the heat of Summer in the Gaol, where *W. Armorer* had thronged up so many together, and caused to be kept in so close, that he could not endure to hear of one abroad) dyed in the prison, and finished her Testimony for the Lord and his Truth, being found faithful in her day, in which she walked in Gravity, Sobriety, and the fear of the Lord, whose end is blessed among the holy Martyrs for evermore.

The 15th of the 11th Month called *January*, 1656, The Sessions began at *Reading*, and the next day being the 16th day, *Joseph Phipps* and *Sarah Lamboll* were called to the Barr; But the Jury being gone out upon the Tryal of a Friend that was committed on another account, brought him in not guilty; which thing not pleasing the prisoners adversaries, *Joseph Phipps* was put by to be tryed by another Jury; and accordingly in the afternoon when he was to come to his Tryal (which was upon the third Account for Meeting) *W. Armorer* called to the Bailliis, saying, go out and pick a Jury, there are honest men enough in the Town you know. *Tho: Skeats* the Bailliif answered, yes Sir *William*, I'll fit you, upon which he went forth, and warning one *Charles Belwood*, formerly *W. Armorer's* Man, he seemed very unwilling to come, which when *W. A.* understood, sent for him again the second time, threatening to fine him if he did not come (it may be, believing he would be a man fit for his purpose, for he hardly ever failed in any Jury, to bring in a *Quaker* guilty.) So a Jury being called, one of the prisoners *Sarah Lamboll* (wife of *George Lamboll*, who is one of the Premaunred persons) was called to the Barr, and they tendered the Oath of Allegiance to her again, and sent her back to the Gaol.

Then *Joseph Phipps* was called to the Barr, and his Indictment was read, to which he had pleaded not guilty the Sessions before at *Newberry*: So he pleaded that there were not the number of five that was of age when he was taken at the Meeting. *Edw: Do by* who *sate*

894

Sate Judg, replied, that was no matter, though there were but one of the age of sixteen years, yet if there were five at the Meeting, he would send that one to prison as a breaker of the Law: The Prisoner replied, how can they make up the number, if they are not takeable?

Judge, yes, they do make up the number, being persons, though we cannot punish them by that Law; but we have another Law, by which we can fine them Twelve pence a piece for not going to Church.

Ay, says *W. Armorer*, there are the three Girls (*Lydia Hersent, M. Kent and Sarah Kent*) I sent to prison for not paying their Twelve pence a piece, and there they shall lye till they pay it; other words were spoken to the same purpose, and so the Jury went forth, the Judg very much insensiing the Jury against the Prisoner, that they might bring him in guilty. And *W. Armorer* sent the Clerk with them with the Act and Indictment, to inform the Jury: and after some time, the Court sent to know whether they were agreed? answer was returned, no: So *W. Armorer* sent *Rich: Grover* his Clerk, who returned, saying, they are not agreed, and I think never will. And after a little space, they sent for the Jury, and asked if they were agreed? they answered no, the Court asked why? they answered, they were not satisfied as to the number of persons, that were at the Meetings, and that there was nothing proved as to matter of exercise, and if there were the number, there was nothing proved what they did there: The Judg then called to *R. Grover*, who was the witness against the Prisoner, to know what he said, who answered, That the Prisoner confessed that they were there to seek the Lord. Upon which the Judg doubled the words over again, saying, look you there, he said, they were there to seek the Lord: The Prisoner replied, saying, is it a crime worthy of Banishment to seek the Lord?

The Judge *Eaw: Dolby*, said yes, (by which the Reader may perceive what lodges in these mens hearts who would be called Christian Magistrates.)

Oh unheard of Cruelty! let the very Turks and Heathen be astonished to hear of these things! and let the names of such be buried in Infamy for ever, and let their memorial rot, who account a crime worthy of banishment or death, to confess the seeking of God,

God. Well, but not to digress, though it be hard to go over these things without continual admiration; but that we desire not so to be larger then a bare Relation of their unreasonable proceedings, leaving it to the ingenuous Readers understanding for amplifications.

So then, *W. Armorer* spoke something to the Jury, and that he could never find our Friends in any exercise, &c.

Upon which one of the Jury-men replied, That he looked on it as an unequal thing that he should be Witness and Judge too.

At which *W. Armorer* began to be angry, and demanded what the Jury-man was, and would see his face, and bid him pull his Hat from his Nose, and asked whether he did go to Church, and whether he was not one of them?

Who answered, No, he was none of them, nor never was at any of their Meetings; and that he did go to Church.

So the Jury being called over by their Names, the Court bid them divide, those that would find the Prisoner guilty, from those that could not, which were six of each.

Upon which *W. Armorer* began to threaten those that could not find the Prisoner guilty, and would have had them fined.

The Judge said, No, let them go together again, and it may be they may be better satisfied.

So the Jury went out the second time, and after some time the Court sent out to know whether they were agreed.

Answer was returned, No.

But the Court sent in again, threatening the Jury that they would adjourn, and then would not accept of any private Verdict, but they should be kept there all night without fire or candle.

Which accordingly after a little space was done, and the Court broke up, and order was given that none should come at the Jury, and that they should not have fire nor candle, &c.

The Jury being kept all night, and the Court being sate the next morning, they sent to the Jury to know if they were agreed.

Who returned answer, No. But after some time, two of the Jury-men began to yield, it is judged rather through fear and weariness, then being satisfied in their judgments. And some of them cryed, A verdict, a verdict; and so they came in.

And the Court asked if they were agreed?

One of them answered, He was not satisfied.

W. Armorer replyed, You shall be satisfied; and the Fore-man saying Guilty, they took no farther notice, though four of them were not satisfied, but in hast calling the Prisoner to the Barr, the Judg, *Edw: Dolby*, past sentence on him, That he should be transported to some of His Majesties Plantations, there to remain seven years. So was returned back to the Gaol. The Prisoner seeing of them resolv-ed to do their work, said little to them; but some short time after, sent a Letter to *Edw: Dolby*; a Copy whereof here followeth.

Reading-Gaol the 23d of the 11th Month, 1666.

Juſtice Dolby,

Seeing thou satest as Judg of the Sessions the last week, and ga-vest sentence of Banishment against me, and being not permit-ted to speak then for my self in the Court, but threatned to be gagged, though my life was concerned; I now send this unto thee, de-siring thy serious consideration hereof: And what hath been done against me, and how unjustly I have been proceeded against from first to last, till sentence of Exilement from my Native Countrey be past, I leave to the witness of God in thy own Conscience, which can bring thy actions to thy remembrance, and will speak the truth of all things as they are: To which I do refer thee for a more par-ticular account of all things that have past; and with which I leave my cause to be pleaded even in thy own conscience, between the Lord and thee; only hereby I give a hint of some things, &c.

Thou mayeft remember, that when *W. Armorer* and thy self came to the house of *Thomas Curtis*, I was there with two persons more above the age of sixteen years, besides *A. Curtis*, and some children, who are not to be accounted as persons to make up the number five: And it appears by the Act, that four may meet; and also *W. A.* and several others of the Kings Justices, have told us that four may meet, and they would not meddle with us; and it is ri-di-culous to think that children of twelve or fourteen years of age will plot

plot or contrive insurrections ; for against such persons as do so contrive insurrections, and plot against the Government, the Act was intended, according to the Preamble of it , &c. And besides , if such childrens being there, do make up the number , how is it that you punish not the children by that Law ? And if the children are not under the breach of that Law, how can three persons break it, there being no more there ? I leave to thy consideration. And the Witness did only say we were there to seek the Lord, (or that we said so) now I hope the Act will not (simply in it self) take hold of such as meet together to seek the Lord, for that is according to the Liturgy of the Church of *England*, which saith , *That in all places, and at all times, men ought to perform holy duty to God* ; and no other could be proved against me, but that we said we were there to seek the Lord ; and is it not a sad thing that men should so far lose their reason and moderation, and deny Christianity, as to banish people for meeting together to seek the Lord, and to perform holy duty to him, when nothing else can be proved , except they will make it a crime worthy of Banishment and Death, to be at the House of *Tho: Curtie*, which no Law doth ; for no man can prove , nor ever shall find, that we meet to contrive Insurrections, or plot against the Government ; and the God of Heaven knows, (who knows the intents of the hearts of all men) that we never so much as thought, much less intended any such thing ; and thy own conscience may tell thee the same. And this not being proved , how can any impartial Jury find us guilty of the breach of this Act , and bring us in guilty of Banishment, (and Death if we return) when nothing can be proved but that we were at such a place, and said we were seeking the Lord ? For nothing else did ever appear : And yet notwithstanding the Jury must go on right or wrong, or else be threatned with fines, &c. in case they bring in not guilty, when they are upon their oaths, and ought to go according to the Evidence, and not to put their consciences to the vote, and to give away the Liberties , Lives , Rights and Priviledges of free-born *English* men , and to oppress and destroy the Kings Subjects, by violating his Laws, and turning of them to a wrong end, as in this case. This Act was made against such as do at their Meetings contrive insurrections, &c. and not against such as do meet really to seek the Lord, as appears by the Preamble of it : Therefore such as do punish people for seeking the

Lord, do go quite contrary to the Act, and turns it to a wrong end, and are no true Friends to the King in so doing, though they pretend Law, and to act according to Law, when indeed their own wills and malicious minds, leads them contrary to Laws; and how contrary it was to the Consciences of some of the Jury-man, thou mightest see, who were not satisfied, nor (it is believed, and credibly reported) are not to this day, but is a load upon their Consciences, and may well be, in that they gave away their power, and indeed the power of the Law, being over-awed by high words; for they ought to have been satisfied in their own Consciences, and not to have looked at the displeasure of any man, being sworn well and truly to try, &c. which I doubt not but thou very well knowest, if thou hadst but done accordingly; and whether these things be according to Reason and Equity, upon which the ancient Laws are said to be grounded, I say, I shall leave to the Witness of God in thy Conscience, which answers the righteous Law, and which will deal truly and plainly with thee, and will either condemn or justify thee in the day of Account. For Friend, know this, and mind also in secret, That an account to God the Judge of quick and dead, must be given by thee, and all men upon the earth; and assuredly he doth behold and mark thy actions, and they are recorded in a Book of remembrance, which shall be accounted for; and though thou maist hide thy self as from man, yet thou canst not hide thy self from him who is the searcher of all hearts, and the tryer of all reins; who will proceed in judgment according to Justice and Equity, by the impartial Evidence of his Witness, the Light of Jesus Christ in thy Conscience, which will bring all thy ways and doings to remembrance, and lay thee open and naked before the Lord God. And Friend, to receive the sentence of condemnation, and to be banished for ever from his presence will be a very sad sentence, and far worse then to be banished from the Land of ones Native, into a strange and Foreign Countrey, for the exercise of ones Conscience towards God, in meeting to seek and wait upon him, and to have and enjoy his presence with one; yet such as do so banish, do very badly in so doing, and which God will undoubtedly call them to a strict account for. And in this is my comfort, that though thou hast sentenced me to Banishment, yet thou canst not banish me from the Lords presence, nor deprive me of the peace of conscience,

ence, which is received through Faith, and living-obedience to the will and requirings of God, and because it is not for evil-doing, for cursing, swearing, drunkenness, blaspheming the Name of God, hurting or wronging any man in this place in which I was born and brought up, &c. but only because I was met with two or three more to seek God. Oh ! may you not be ashamed to profess the Name of God and Christ, and banish those that meet in his Name ? and profess Christianity, and yet banish it out of your coasts. And if Christ were now here among you, as he was among the cruel Jews, would you not banish him if he met with his Disciples ? who met upon Mountains by the Sea-side, and other places, separate from the Jews and Heathens Synagogues and Temples, which he and his Apostles gathered people from, to worship God in the spirit and truth, and brought them to know their bodies to be the Temple of the Holy Ghost. I say, if he were here now, and did meet, would you not banish him, as you do his followers ? And in as much as you do it unto them, you do it unto him, against whom ye are striving, who will be too hard for you ; for never did any strive against the Lord, and prosper.

And that thou shouldst be found in this work beyond most in the Nation, will be no credit to thee ; and truly this action has far outstript the cruel Jews, who though their Law allowed forty stripes, yet would the Executioners give but thirty nine, because they would not deal with persons to the rigor of the Law, which you have cruelly gone beyond, and exceeded upon me. And as the Lord God doth mark thy actions, so will men also mark thee, and take notice of thy doings.

Wherefore it would be well to consider and repent of what thou hast done, and not rashly to run (nor to be led) on in this work of persecuting of innocent people for the exercise of their tender consciences towards God, considering the reward that hath attended Persecutors in all ages, and how their Names have been a reproach and a stink in after-generations ; and will not such much more stink, that sentence people to Banishment for seeking the Lord, and put Irons upon them, and then link two of us together in Irons, as if we were such intollerable offenders, as were not worthy to live. For as soon (almost) as I came in, Irons were clapt on me, and then linked to Christopher Cheeseman, who had Irons also ; but through Justice

stice *Armorer* means (as I am informed) the Irons were taken off again, and only the Locks remains on our Legs, which I doubt not but thou mightest cause to be taken off, if thou wouldst: However I am well contented, knowing I have not deserved this cruel usage at the Gaolers hands, nor at thine; but this cruelty and the bitterness of Envy, is hereby in some measure made manifest.

But I shall forbear to lay open the Gaolers cruelty, it being not pertinent to my present business, and rather desire thou mayest consider of the things before mentioned, so as to amend thy ways and doings, whereby thou mayest free thy self from that guilt, which no man can acquit thee of, which thou wilt attract by these unneighbour-like, unchristian-like, yea, and I may say, unlaw-like Proceedings.

I remain a lover of thy soul, a witness against injustice and unrighteousness, in the long-suffering spirit of Jesus, for whose sake thou hast given sentence of BANISHMENT against me from the Land of my Nativity, who have learned to do good to them that hate and persecute me, who am called

Joseph Phipps.

The 27th of the 11th Month called January, 1666, *W. Armorer* came early to the Meeting again; and there being but four young Maidens, viz. *Hannah Kent, Sarah Binfield, Eliz: Whiteheart, and Anne her Sister*: He said, *Here is a goodly company*: and commanded one of his men to fetch some water: His man went to *Dan: Seamers*; and borrowed a Bucket and a nasty Bowl-dish, and having brought the Bucket of water into the Meeting-room, *W. Armorer* took the Bowl-dish, and filling it with the water, threw it with great violence in the Maidens faces, filling the dish many times so fast one after another, that with the violent throwing in their faces, and the coldness of the water, one of the Maidens was like to lose her breath, and fainted down, being wet in such a cruel inhumane manner, that it run down their necks, and wet them very much, so that they were faint to go home and change their clothes, it being in the Winter time. And having turned them out of the Meeting-room, he went his ways.

And

And how unlike a Justice this was, let the Reader judg, but more like a rude savage creature, indeed hardly like a man, and yet this is the man that rules as King in the Town of *Reading*, that doth what he will without controle. Well, again

The 17th of the first Month called *March*, 1667, *W. Armorer* and , Mayor, came to the Meeting, and took *Henry Adams*, *Sarah Binfield*, *Eliz: Whiteheart*, *Mary Webb*, and *Eliz: Tudway* the younger, and sent them all to the House of Correction, though there were but four of the age of sixteen years, *H. Adams* on the third account, *Eliz: Whiteheart* and *Mary Webb* for six Morths, *S. Binfield* for three Months, and *Eliz: Tudway*, being not fourteen years of age, till she paid Twelve pence for not being at his Church.

A day or two after, a Neighbour of *Eliz: Tudways* (the woman having a love to the child) went to *W. Armorer*, and offered to pay the twelve pence; notwithstanding *W. Armorer* refused, and told her, That except she would pay twelve pence more, she should not be discharged, though she was committed but for one twelve pence.

But the woman refusing to pay the other twelve pence to his Clerk, *Richard Grover*, the child remains in prison to this day, her Father and Mother being both Prisoners also at the County-Gaol, having three small children besides.

And having sent the five above named to prison, they (*W. Armorer* and *Tho: Coats*) went into the house of *Tho: Curtis*, and going up stairs, went into A. C. n^ts her Chamber, where she was not being very well. *W. Armorer* protested he would send her to Gaol because the Meeting was cont nued at the house; but if she would shut up the doors, and suffer no more Meetings, she should have her Liberty.

A. Curtis replied, the house was her Husbands, and he might do what he would with it; and bid them judg whether they themselves would look on it as an equal thing for their Wives to contradict their servants in what they did require them to do.

And after some other discourse of this and other things, being going away, *W. Armorer* bid A. C. make her ready, protesting he would send her to Gaol: And accordingly sent up the Contable, *Jo: Stretch*, to her Chamber, to have her to the Gaol, saying, That Sir

Sir William had sent him. To whom she answered, That she was not then in a capacity to go. So the Constable civilly went away.

But the next day W. A. sent him again, being very angry, and threatned if he did not carry her to Gaol, he would lay him by the heels.

So the Constable came to her again, having a Warrant authorizing him to take the body of A. Curtis, and have her to the Gaol, to be kept upon her former Commitment, from which she was freed, as appears by the discharge under his own hand before mentioned, of which the Reader may take notice. So she was had to the Gaol, where she now remains.

The 16th of the second Month, called April, 1667, the Sessions was holden at Newberry for the County; to which place Henry Adams was had, being committed on the third account for meeting. And heing called to the Barr, an Indictment was read against him for being at an unlawful Seditious Meeting, &c.

To which he pleaded Not guilty of any Seditious Meeting, or plotting, or contriving Insurrections, &c.

So the Court asked the Prisoner if he would give bond to appear the next Sessions.

He answered, He was a stranger in that place; but if they would take his word to appear, he would promise to appear.

But being not accepted, the Gaoler took him away, and had him back again to the Gaol.

The Prisoner being returned, his Father, Henry Adams, living in the Town, and hearing that the Court had offered him liberty till the next Sessions, upon bond of appearance, went himself to W Armore, and offered to be bound for his Sons appearance. Yet notwithstanding it had been proffered, W. A. would not take it, but began to rail against the Quakers, and telling such stories concerning strings, &c. which are incredible to any man of understanding.

The 9th of the 4th Month, called June, --67, W. A. came again to the Meeting, and pull'd out the Friends there met, and so let them go; which was not usual to let any go out of his hands after he had taken them.

And the 14th of the 5th Month, called July, --67, W. A. his man came to the Meeting, and having looked in, went out at the door,

door, and pulled the door after him; it being a Spring-lock, catcht, and shut himself out.

Soon after came *W. Armorer*, and finding the door shut, sent for a sledg to break it open; but one of the Friends perceiving that he would break open the door, went and opened it, saying, *I do open the door, that that thou mayst see our innoc ncy, that we are not plotting against the Government; for if we were (as he has often accused us) we would not have opened the door.*

He replied, If you had not, I would have broken it open, though his own man lockt it.

Daniel Seamer (one of the Neighbours) coming into the Meeting-room with them, said, Sir *William*, I hope the next Rejoycing-day, all these forms and stools shall be brought out to help make a Bonfire. To which *W. Armorer* willingly assented.

So *R. Grover* his Clerk took the Names of nine, viz. *Rich: Hntchins, John Littleworth, Anne Sharp, Eliz: Tudway, Mary Coale, Hannah Kent, Martha Cheeseman, Francis Greenaway, and Eliz: Booth;* and being had to his house, where was also *Edw: Dolby*, they committed five to the House of Correction for three Months, *Mariha Cheeseman* being one, whose Husband is a Prisoner at the Gaol; by which he shews his destructive spirit to humane society. And in some discourse *Eliz: Tudway*, one of the Prisoners, telling *W.A.* that these things must be accounted for one day: He answered, Aye, you shall see as the Day of Judgment, whose arse will be blackest, yours or mine. And such like communication he has many times, which is almost a shame for Civility to mention, but that people may see what a man this is to make a Justice.

And going to another, *Eliz: Booth*, stripped up her sleeve, asking her if she had any black strings about her arm: She answered, No, she was no Papist. But (said he) you are bewitched.

So a Mittimus being made, they sent *Mary Coale* to Gaol for six Months; (her Husband *Leo: Coale*, being there a Premunired-person, and two of his Brothers) and *A. Sharp, Eliz: Tudway, and Hannah Kent*, to the Gaol on the third account.

And the 16th of the same Month, the Sessions was holden at *Abingdon*, to which place *H. Adams, A Sharp, E. Tudway, and H. Kent* were had; and the same day the three women were called to the Bar, and an Indictment being read against them for being at an unlaw-

ful Meeting, &c. they pleaded Not guilty. So the Court told them, That if they would give Security for their appearance the next Sessions, they might have their liberty. Upon which a Neighbour of E. Tudway's, Tho: Skeats, proffered to be bound for her. And another man standing by, said he would be bound for her, though he never saw her face before. But the Clerk of the Sessions, Geo: Champion, hearing that, said, They might do that at Reading, and they would leave it to Sir W. A. and Justice Dolby: So they were taken from the Barr, and after they came to Reading, there was a very sufficient man of the Town, Jo: Kent, went to W. A. and proffered to be bound for his daughter Hannah her appearance the next Sessions, but he would not take it.

Then H. Adams was called to the Barr, and W. A. and the Justices called for a Jury, picking such and such men; naming them, the Judg, Tho: Holt, saying, Put down such a man, he is an honest man. The Jury being sworn well and truly to try, &c. the Indictment was read, to which the Prisoner had pleaded Not guilty the Sessions before at Newberry. So now he desired that Witness might be produced to prove what the Fact was, or the evil he had done; and if he had done any evil, was willing to suffer accordingly. But no witness appearing to prove any thing that he had done, neither that he was at any Meeting, the Judg called for the Records; upon which the Clerk made diligent search, and sent his man out of the Court to look after them, and his man returned with great Rolls of Paper under his Arms, but could not find the Records. Then the Judg stood up, saying, If you have lost the Records for the first and second offence, we cannot proceed, but this must go for the first offence. Upon which W. A. stood up in great fury, saying he would take his Oath that the Records were true, though they were lost. So they gave him the Book, and he kissed it, and sat down again on the Bench as one of the Prisoners Judges.

Then the Judg Tho: Holt turned his tale again, like himself, and many others such as he is, who can turn sometimes one way, and sometimes another, said, You Gentlemen of the Jury, you see here is Sir W. A. hath taken his Oath, (having only taken the Book in his hand, and kissed it) that the Records are true, though they are lost; and you may conclude there was a first and second offence, before there can be a third (though there was no witness to prove a third offence, but because W. A. had killed

kissed the Book, and said the Records were true, though they were lost, for the first and second; therefore they would conclude too, that this was the third;) and said the Judge, *You cannot but find him guilty.*

So the Jury went forth, and in a little time returned, and their Verdict was, *Not guilty.*

Then the Judge stood up, saying, *How so? hath not Sir W. Armo-
rer sworn that the Records are true?*

And after the Jury had given some reasons why they could not find him guilty, they went forth the second time, and a Bailif was sworn to lock them up, and that none should come at them. Yet notwithstanding, soon after they were gone out, W. A. went off the Bench to the Jury, and threatned them, as some of themselves did since confess; and a little after W. A.'s return to the Court, the Jury came in, and the Fore-man said the Prisoner was found guilty: But some of the Jury not being satisfied, would not come into the Court, for they did not agree to the Verdict; and one of them said he never would agree to it: And being in a confusion, being much threatned, they would not appear; but the Court being in a hurry, and angry, the Judge said they should be fined if they did not come in: Upon which (being over-awed by high words and threatenings) they came in; and being called over, they called the Prisoner to the Barr, and asked him what he had to say for himself? The Prisoner said, *Was there not a Bailif sworn that none should come at the Jury, but they should be locked up, &c. and which of you have made this man forswear himself? Was it not thee? pointing to W. A.* At which they laughed, saying it was by the leave of the Court. The Prisoner replied, *Well, I see you have a cunning way to swear, and your wills are your Law; and 'tis to littl purpose what I say to you, for you are determined what to do; and if I must be a sufferer for well-doing, the will of the Lord be done.* (For nothing of evil could be proved, no not so much as the third offence, neither Records for the first and second, as is said.)

Much more was spoken, but this in short was the substance.

So the Gaoler took him away, but no sentence was given against him, and so he was returned to the Gaol where he now remains. And having since asked the Gaoler what order he had from the Court concerning him, telling him that he had no sentence, and yet re-

mained in Prison. The Gaoler answered, *Harry, the art for Transporation, they have done it since among themselves, so that it is not hel*

Now whether these things be according to the Law, according to which these men pretend they proceed, let all that have any knowledg therein judg; but we are sure it is not according to Reason and Equity, upon which the Laws ought to be grounded: And if these proceedings be not according to Law, how can these men bring honor to the King and his Government, by these things? Let the wise in heart judg; and the Lord give men understanding and hearts to look into these things, lest the pretence of Law and Legal Proceedings, become a Snare, and a Ginne unto the Innocent and Righteous.

And this is as short Account of the Proceedings of *W. Armorer*, as we could draw up, to keep the substance. Many circumstances we have omitted, for we desire not to wade in such things, but rather to speak the least of things, then to go one jot beyond. But much more we could say; and these things our very Adversaries themselves may remember, if they will but call to mind their actions. And though the said *W. Armorer* hath dealt thus hardly with us, to throw us into prison heaps upon heaps, we may say, yet his enmity against us is farther made manifest, in that he hath many times charged the Gaoler not to suffer one of us to go over the threshold, but to keep us in very close, both in the extream heat of Summer, when many thousands have dyed through Infectious and Pestilential Diseases, and several in this Town; even then have we been thronged together, as if it were on purpose to destroy us: And also in the very cold Winters, three of which we have patiently endured, and now almost four Summers; and if any should ask the reason, why the fore-going Relation may answer for us, which will tell them, 'Tis for seeking the Lord, for waiting upon him, for worshipping him, for making conscience of our wayes, and because we cannot transgres his righteous Law and Commandment, who saith, *Swear not at all*; and not for any evil-doing: For if our adversaries themselves had any evil to lay to our charge, no doubt they would publish it to the whole world, and we desire they may. And yet though we have been thus hardly used, yet blessed be the Lord we are yet alive, though our health may be much impaired, or some of us at least, and but one hath dyed in prison, and one not long after he was released,

which

which was judged his Imprisonment might be a great cause of being kept in, in very cold weather, and taking great cold ; and when we have been sick, and have desired to go out to take things necessary, which could not well be done in the prison, where so many Prisoners are, it has been denied, and we must not be suffered, though our lives sometimes have been concerned, except we would give such Bonds and Engagements, which it is not unlikely but he himself knew we could not for Conscience-sake do , and only to be at a house in the same Town. And as *Gurtis* being not well a little time since, the Gaoler sent to him to know if she might go home to her house , it being extream hot weather, and having but little room in the Gaol, he would not permit her : And a Friend being with him afterward, and telling him how they were thronged up together , and how extream hot it was in the Gaol, the Gaoler being present, said *Sir William will let any of you out, giving security.* He answered, *No, Mrs. Curtis should not if she would give security, bkt should l,e there till she rot.*

And also *Christopher Cheeseman*, another of the Prisoners, being very sick, almo^t unto death, his wife went to *W. A.* with a Letter, to desire liberty for him to go to his own house, being almost over against the Gaol, to take things necessary for the recovery of his health, being kept in a cold Garret among many Prisoners , in the cold Winter-time ; but *W. A.* not only refused to grant the womans reasonable desire , but refused to take the Letter also , saying he should lye there till he rot, before he would do it.

So that he doth not only throng them up in Prisons , but makes himself as aoler also ; so that though the Gaoler know his Prisoners, and can trust them, as being true and faithful to their words, yet he must not let a Prisoner stir over the threshold , for fear of displeasing *Sir William* : Which dealing can hardly be parallel'd in *England*, that Justices should be seekers after men without any complaint, Accusers, Judges and Gaolers, &c.

And now it may not be amiss to give a short Relation of the proceedings of *Humphry Hide*; a Justice so called, n the same County, against some of our Friends, being his Neighbours and Tenants , it being one in quality with *W. Armoror's*, though not in quantity.

William Mathews, John Langly, Mary Slade Widow, and Richard Slade her Son, being summoned to appear at *Abingdon* at the general Quarter-Sessions, holden the 14th day of the 5th Month called *July, 1653*: At which place accordingly (having done no man wrong) they did appear, and being called to the Barr, and called by Name, an Indictment was read against them for not being at their Church in four Months before; and the Court asked them if they would conform and come to Church, or no? The Friends answered, They could not come to their Church, because they had never enjoyed the presence of God there, and that was the cause of their absenting. Upon which the Court presently began to proceed (without any delay, or time of consideration) to fine them according to the Law which was made for the paying of twelve pence for every first dayes absence from their Church. But one of them began to question whether that Law would hold them. A Lawyer standing by, took up a Statute-Book, and found a Statute which was made for the Papists, to fine them twenty pounds a month, and said that would hold them, he was sure of it; so they read the Statute to them, and fined them twenty pounds a month for the four months, which was eighty pounds a piece. But *Humph: Hide* who sat Judge pretended he was sorry for *Rjcb. Slade*, and *W. Mathews*, saying they were good Harvest-men, (for they desired, that if any there had any evil to accuse them of, they should speak). And *H. Hide* said, he did believe that neither of them were able to pay the Fine: Which did the more manifest his hard-hearted Cruelty towards them, because he knew they were not able to pay such a great fine, which he, with the rest, had imposed upon them, being his Tenants, their Lives being in some of his Estate, viz. *Mary Slade*, Widow, an ancient woman of near seventy years of age, and not a tooth in her head, being his Tenant in possession, and *Richard* her Son in reversion, after her; and *William Mathew* in reversion, and *John Langly* a Tenants Son, being all his Neighbours, and labouring-men, and having little but what they work for, being always his Neighbours. And some time after they were committed to the Gaol, *William Mathew* his Mother-in-law went to their Landlord, *Humph: Hide*, to see if she could prevail with him to get *William's* Liberty. He answered, He could not do any thing in it. She asked if he would give his consent to his coming home. He answered, No, never while he did live; for he

he did not love them so well : And so they have remained Prisoners above these four years.

Also another poor man and his wife , the one about 74 years, and the other near thereabouts, because they could not go to their Worship, the woman being almost blind ; the Constable going to their House to distrain, and finding no goods, made a complaint to *Humph: Hide*, who caused the old man and his wife to be brought before him, and made a Mittimus, and sent them to the Gaol, being above twenty miles from their habitation, because they did not go to their Worship, to which he would force and compel them, or else the Gaol must be their habitation. The old mans Name was *John Cooke*, and *Jane* his Wife.

The first day of the 5th Month called *July*, --66, *Humph: Hide* sent a party of Soldiers with a Corporal, and Capt. *Garrs* with a party of Horse and Foot, to the House of *Bartholomew Mallam*, in *Lamburn Woodlands*, and meeting with some Friends in the fields, they took them, and had them to the House, and put them in at door, and then accused them for being at a Meeting, and so took them, and had them down to *Lamburn Town* ; to which place *H. Hide*, with some other Justices, were gathered ; and being brought before them, they committed *Richa d Brakes*, *Oliver Sanome*, and one more, to the Gaol for three months, and seven men more, to the *Bewell* at *Abingdon* for three months ; and *Barthol. Mallam*, the man of the house, they committed upon the Statute of the 35 of *Queen Elizabeth*, to the Gaol.

And about the 4th of the 8th Month, called *October*, --66, the Sessions was holden at *Newberry*, to which place *B. M.* was had, and indicted for being at a Meeting : To which having pleaded Not guilty, they demanded Writies till next Sessions, upon which two of his acquaintance engag'd for his appearance, and so he had his liberty til next Sessions.

And tie next Sessions being holden at *Reading* the 16th day of the 11th Month called *January*, --66, he had his Tryal, and the Jury brought him in Not guilty of the breach of that Statute, but guilty of not coming to their Church, because the Constable swore against him that he had not seen him at their Church in two years; so he was fined.

Reading the 15th of the 6th
Month, 1667.

Remains

217
- and before even the beginning of mediæval compilation

Remaining PRISONERS in the Gaol, Forty.

Twenty one having the Sentence of a Premunire past against them.

Three for refusing the Oath of Allegiance.

Five under the Sentence of BANISHMENT.

Three fined twelve-pence a piece, being under the age of sixteen years, taken at a Meeting.

Four for being at meeting, three on the third account, one for six months.

Four fined eighty pounds a piece, for not going to Steeple-house.

Prisoners remaining at the House of Correction, Eight.

Five committed for three months, for meeting.

Two for six months.

One Child fined twelve-pence for not being at Steeple-house, being taken at a Meeting.

218
- and before even the beginning of mediæval compilation

Two for six months, for being at meeting.

THE END.

219
- and before even the beginning of mediæval compilation